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SIGN THE LETTER



Letter from concerned criminologists regarding the representation of Israeli Academic Institutions at the ESC, Bucharest 11/9 - 14/9

As criminologists, it is our responsibility to understand and address crime, especially when it affects disempowered or vulnerable people. Reviewing the program, we noticed that our conference included work produced by Israeli institutions. Even in the opening talk, the University of Jerusalem was mentioned without acknowledging the horrors it engages in and supports. The findings below show that these institutions are involved in serious human rights violations. These sources show ties with the IDF and the Israeli government, the repercussions for those speaking up, prominent figures within the institutions speaking out in favour of their government's conduct, and so on. Finally, we end with two demands.

Why a boycott?

The Israeli assault against the Palestinian people has reached a level unseen in our days. The International Court of Justice considers the Israeli mass killing of Palestinians in Gaza as a plausible genocide¹, and the International Criminal Court Prosecutor acknowledges Israel's responsibility in war crimes and crimes against humanity². When the Lancet published a letter, a cautious estimate of the number of murdered Palestinians was made. "It is not implausible to estimate that up to 186,000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza"³. No universities are standing in Gaza. An entire generation is deprived of starting the academic year. There was no graduating class of 2023-2024. Their rights have been 'boycotted' since 1947.

Since its founding, the **academic institutions in Israel have partnered with the political-military establishment**. While there are a handful of principled academics (who then suffer the consequences, as was the case for Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem⁴), these academic institutions support, perpetuate and whitewash the Israeli occupation, apartheid and now genocide of Palestinians and their land. Dr. Maya Wind, with whom we are in touch, wrote "Towers of Ivory and Steel: How Israeli Universities Deny Palestinian Freedom" (2024) & in a public speech at the University of Ghent, she said:

"Not one, not a single one, of the Israeli university administrations has at any point in the last eight months called on the Israeli government to cease the

¹ <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203447>

²

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-applications-arrest-warrants-situation-st>
[ate](#)

³ Khatib, R., McKee, M., & Yusuf, S. (2024). Counting the dead in Gaza: difficult but essential. *The Lancet*, 404(10449), 237-238. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)01169-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)01169-3)

⁴ Her work includes "[Arrested Childhood in Spaces of Indifference: The Criminalized Children of Occupied East Jerusalem](#)". She correctly characterized the actions of her government in Gaza as genocidal, and said what international law shows, that Palestine is occupied since 1948. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem suspended her and wrote an open letter stating that "as a proud Israeli, public, and Zionist institution, the Hebrew University strongly condemns Prof. Shalhoub-Kevorkian's recent shocking and outrageous statements". They also used the argument of academic freedom against her, saying she pushed its boundaries too far. See <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-791577> She would also be arrested by the Israeli Police, discussed later.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240419-120-academics-condemn-israels-arrest-of-palestinian-professor-opposed-to-genocide/>

intentional bombardment and destruction of the Palestinian universities and the utter decimation of Palestinian higher education. And this should not surprise us, because not only have Israeli universities, by design and for decades, from the very founding, been pillars of Israeli settler-colonial rule, pillars of the apartheid regime, they are themselves actively participating in this genocide. Over the course of the last eight months, every Israeli university has offered institutes, resources, and new courses to produce hasbara. This is Israeli state propaganda to defend Israel from international criticism, and particularly in the last month, to counter the mass mobilization of students and faculty across campuses across the world."

As criminologists, we question, analyze and research "knowledge concerning the explanation, prevention, control and treatment of crime and delinquency, offenders and victims, including the measurement and detection of crime, legislation and the practice of criminal law, and law enforcement, judicial, and correctional systems", as described in the ESC's constitution.

Our discipline and its related fields are an integral part of what Wind calls the "discursive and legal infrastructure" that aims to "justify Israeli violations of international human rights law and the laws of war, continually developing legal interpretations that shield the Israeli state from accountability for its illegal military tactics and permanent military occupation" (2024, p. 24). There are documented instances of the **close ties between Israeli criminologists and the Israeli state apparatus**. The former commissioner of the Israeli National Police himself stated that one of the first things he did when in office was contact Israeli criminologists. One of the leading experts at Hebrew University, of which there are also academics present, sent him a comprehensive file of research that was used to guide his policies. He also instituted the advisory academic forum for the police commissioner. Academics in Israel praised him for his 'science-based' work⁵ and held a ceremony honouring him when his term ended. The year he started as commissioner, the regulations regarding live fire for police were updated to allow them to use it against anyone who *appears to be throwing or is about to throw* a firebomb or a *slingshot*⁶.

Another example is the academic work of these Israeli institutions on 'counterterrorism'. They promote the '**proactive approach**', which can clearly be seen in the number of **Palestinians, and specifically minors in administrative detention**⁷. Besides the intentional use of research, there is also work "based on data produced through the violation of human rights and extracted by academics without consents", which "would fail an ethics review in most universities" (Wind, 2024: 42). That there is a representative from the **Israeli Prison Rehabilitation Authority** attending the ESC defies belief.

Additionally, several academics of **Ariel University** are present. **This institution is located in Occupied Palestinian Territories, in the occupied West Bank.** This clearly violates international law and raises questions about the ESC's tacit endorsement thereof.

Researchers have an obligation to the truth. As concerned criminologists and members of the ESC, we want to preserve the social and scientific integrity of our field. Hence, we urge you to consider an institutional academic boycott at the ESC (working groups) level. Concretely,

⁵ Perry, S., & Wolfowicz, M. (2023). The Role of the "Super Evidence Cop" in Evidence-Based Policing: The Israeli Case. In D. Weisburd, T. Jonathan-Zamir, G. Perry, & B. Hasisi (Eds.), *The Future of Evidence-Based Policing* (pp. 273–291), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁶ https://www.dci-palestine.org/year_in_review_2016

⁷ https://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention/statistics

we ask you to follow the example of the European Association of Social Anthropology (EASA). Its General Assembly adopted a motion concerning collaborations with Israeli academic institutions in light of the ongoing systematic human rights violations in Palestine, Israeli war crimes, crimes against humanity and plausible genocide committed in the Gaza strip⁸. Let us, as criminologists, follow in their footsteps. This is why we demand the ESC to:

1. Refrain from collaborating with Israeli academic institutions until Israel complies with International Law and International Humanitarian Law and ends the occupation of the Palestinian Territories.
2. Encourage ESC members not to enter into institutional arrangements, e.g. through common research projects and grants, with Israeli academic institutions.

There is no academic freedom until it applies to us all.

⁸ <https://easamembers4palestine.wordpress.com/>

Contextualization and evidence for our claims:

- Ariel University:

- o Located in occupied palestinian territories in the occupied West Bank. This violates international law.
- o Wind, 2024:
 - 'To support Ariel University is to support Zionism.' —Avraham Zion, professor at Ariel University¹⁶²
 - 'Ariel was established in 1978 in the central West Bank by a "settlement core" led by employees of Israeli Military Industries and their families.¹⁶⁷ In 1973, they proposed that a settlement be founded at the heart of the West Bank yet a short commute from the Israeli Military Industries headquarters just north of Tel Aviv

- University of Haifa

- o Hosts the Israeli National Defense College
 - <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/military-colleges>
- o A screenshot of University of Haifa's twitter celebrating its work to collect military gear for the soldiers (one of many such posts across universities).



- o Source: Wind, 2024.
 - The university was strategically laid in Galilee, where the sizable Palestinian population was considered a "demographic problem". Its location on the Carmel mountain used to be populated by Palestinians, who were expelled by Zionist militias and the Israeli military in 1948. Part of the campus replaces the Palestinian village of al-Khureiba
 - In line with its origins, the University of Haifa has long provided its urban planning and geography expertise to the Israeli government to

support "Judaization" policies. In particular, it had a crucial contribution to the concept of mitspim (lookouts) project, i.e. nuclei of Jewish settlement built on strategically hilltops throughout the Galilee. Mitspim initiated and solidified Jewish presence and expansion. In 1986 a total of sixty mitspim projects had been established as exclusively Jewish settlements vetting potential residents through racialized selection criteria, all contributing to the goal of winning the "demographic battle" against the Palestinians. In 2003, one of the most famous academics of the University of Haifa assessed the mitspim method as highly effective at land takeover and at breaking up contiguous Palestinian territory, thereby accelerating the massive transfer of private Palestinian land to the Israeli state. All this time, the University of Haifa has routinely provided the "Judaization" expertise of its academics experts to the state of Israel, thereby forming a pillar of the Galilee's "Judaization".

- The high tower of the University of Haifa provided communication and relay antennas to the Israeli military until the early 2000s, thereby serving a dual academic-military use. Furthermore, the University of Haifa organizes [military colleges](#). For example, it offered for 14 years the Havatzalot training program for Israeli security forces before transferring it to the Hebrew University in 2019. Through the National Security College military academy, it offers a tailored master's degree in security theory for the Israeli colonels and high-ranking members of Israeli security agencies. Through another military academy, the Alon Command and Control College, it also offers tailored master's degrees in political science to army battalion commanders and air force squadron commanders, with a specialization in "military security".
- At the University of Haifa, the Comper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism mobilizes students within the "Ambassadors Online" program of the hasbara – the state propaganda strategy – aimed, among other things, at combatting the academic boycott of Israel.
- Via its Zinman Institute of Archaeology, the University of Haifa led archaeological projects in Occupied Palestinian Territories near Nablus and in the Jordan Valley.
- The historian Ilan Pappé and his former MA student of the University of Haifa are among the most famous examples of how Israeli universities defame and intimidate researchers investigating Israeli crimes during the Nakba of 1948, when two-thirds of the Palestinian population were brutally expelled by the Zionist militias and later Israeli army.

- **Bar-Ilan University:** Maya Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, 2024,
 - o The department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University played a role in denying the claims of Palestinian villagers of Susiya to their lands, arguing of the Jewish character of the city, while traces of its Muslim past were on purpose erased from the historical record. Another excavation supported by Bar-Ilan University was used to legitimize and expand settlements on privately owned Palestinian lands at Khirbet al-Mazra'a. Bar-Ilan University has also been conducting excavations in the occupied West

Bank at different locations (Khirbet Jib'it, Khirbet Marajim, Khirbet Tinah) in the 2020's.

- o Bar-Ilan University runs together with Technion the Bareket master's program for training soldiers in data engineering for military application.
- o Bar Ilan University [works closely](#) with Israel's security services, condemned by the [UN Committee against Torture](#) for their use of illegal interrogation tactics.

- **Open University of Israel**

- o Boasts about how it is the only college that can provide education to employed soldiers.
 - The OUI has been successfully educating IDF soldiers for over thirty years. Currently, more than 2,000 active-duty IDF soldiers are studying towards their undergraduate degrees at the Open University. Moreover, the OUI's expertise led to the recent launch of the IDF College of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, which offers IDF soldiers an MBA.

- **Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Maya Wind:**

- o Hebrew University's campus was strategically laid on the Mount Scopus in 1918 and opened in 1925. It was then expanded in West Jerusalem, by setting-up its Giv'at Ram campus on the ruins of the Palestinian village of Sheikh Badr, whose residents were expelled by the Haganah paramilitary in 1948. It also expanded into occupied East Jerusalem, resulting in repression of the Palestinian village of Issawiyeh. The establishment of Hebrew University has served as a model for other universities in territorial conquest and expansion of Isralian settlements across historic Palestine.
- o In 1948, the Hebrew University played an important role in the 1948 actions of the Haganah Zionist militia by developing typhoid-dysentery bacteria as a biological weapon to poison Palestinian water sources in the context of the biological department at HEMED, the Science Corps.
- o Furthermore, the National Library embedded at the Hebrew University still displays thousands of books and other items stolen from Palestinians during the war of 1948 into the early 1950s.

Since the 60's and until present, Hebrew University has played an important role in destroying and ignoring evidence of the early Islamic history of the city of Jerusalem and only highlighting its Jewish roots. This also happened in other locations, for example in Susiya.
- o After the 1948 war, Mt. Scopus has officially had the status of a demilitarized enclave. However, it has been repeatedly used for military purposes since then, facilitated by Hebrew University. Furthermore, Hebrew University offers training programs for Israeli security forces: Havatzalot, offering soldiers Middle East expertise, and Gamla, a program for Intelligence Corps officers. Havatzalot students' campus dorm at Hebrew University is designated as 'closed military base'. Hebrew University's Talpiot program is the Israeli military's most elite Atuda program, for soldiers that are trained at the Air Force Command and Leadership School on the Giv'at Ram campus, but also in military bases and security state facilities. Hebrew's University commercialization company Yissum claims global leadership in technologies used for "homeland security
- o Hebrew University also provides training to the national police and Shin Bet. Finally, its criminology department is a pioneer in 'counterterror policing', producing 'field-proven' strategies violating fundamental rights of Palestinians.

- o [On their site](#) they offer course credit, special scholarships and benefits for soldiers serving in Gaza and explicitly writing that they are proud to support their students serving in Gaza.

More information & further reading

<https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott>

<https://easamembers4palestine.wordpress.com/frequently-asked-questions/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/10/gaza-schools>

<https://stopwapenhandel.org/european-universities-cooperation-with-israel-in-eu-security-research-programs/>

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2001/09/30/second-class/discrimination-against-palestinian-arab-children-israels-schools>

<https://www.dci-palestine.org/>

https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/5845_Imprisoned_Paper_Eng.pdf

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/detention-context-escalation-hostilities-gaza>

<https://visualizingpalestine.org/visual/academia-apartheid/>



Israeli universities participate in colonization of Palestinian lands and forced displacement of Palestinian communities

ACADEMIA SERVING APARTHEID

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY
Built on top of the depopulated Palestinian village of Sheikh Muwannis; suppresses commemoration of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948

HEBREW UNIVERSITY
Situated in occupied East Jerusalem on confiscated land; collaborates with Israeli police in the surveillance and harassment of the Palestinian neighborhood of Isawiyah

ARIEL UNIVERSITY
Located in Ariel, an illegal Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank

VISUALIZING PALESTINE SOURCES bit.ly/VP-israeliunis
WWW.VISUALIZINGPALESTINE.ORG

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MAY 2022

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Palestinian students, faculty, and staff at Israeli universities experience racism and discrimination

ACADEMIA SERVING APARTHEID

PALESTINIAN STUDENTS

In 2022, two Palestinian students at Hebrew University were arrested by off-duty police officers and suspended from campus for singing Arabic folk songs

40% of polled Palestinian students report experiencing racism from faculty; students have been denied access to scholarships or campus housing due to not serving in the Israeli military

PALESTINIAN FACULTY

20% of Israeli citizens are Palestinians, yet in 2020 Palestinians made up less than 4% of faculty at Israeli-accredited universities

PALESTINIAN STAFF

In 2016, Tel Aviv University banned staff at its tuition call center from speaking Arabic on calls

VISUALIZINGPALESTINE

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Israeli universities cater to military recruitment and training



ACADEMIA SERVING APARTHEID

TEL AVIV, HEBREW, HAIFA, & BEN GURION UNIVERSITIES

Offered special benefits and scholarships to student-soldiers who participated in the 2014 military assault on Gaza

HAIFA UNIVERSITY

Hosts three military training colleges, enrolls the largest number of Israeli military and security personnel, and offers a Bachelor's program tailored for the Israeli navy

HEBREW UNIVERSITY

Hosts the Israeli military's Talpiot and Havatzalot programs, which recruit students into elite military units and the intelligence corps

VISUALIZINGPALESTINE

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Israeli universities host propaganda initiatives and repress criticism of Israel

ACADEMIA SERVING APARTHEID

HAIFA UNIVERSITY

Revoked the degree of an MA student who researched the 1948 massacre of Palestinians in Tantura, emblematic of wider repression of critical research and expression at Israeli universities.

Hosts the Ambassadors Online program that trains students to become "digital advocates for Israel"

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY HEADS IN ISRAEL

Spearheads and coordinates initiatives against the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement for justice and equality

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Israeli universities benefit from close relationships with the military and multinational weapons companies

ACADEMIA SERVING APARTHEID

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY & TECHNION

Work with the Israeli military to develop unmanned combat vehicles and heavy machinery used to commit war crimes such as home demolitions

TECHNION, BAR-ILAN, & BEN GURION UNIVERSITIES

Participate in a robotics project funded by the Israeli Ministry of Defense and United States Department of Defense, an example of military priorities dictating academic research

TECHNION

Partners with arms developers such as Elbit and Rafael, whose weapons and surveillance technologies are tested on Palestinians and exported globally

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Ariel University	7
Ashkelon Academic College	4
Bar-Ilan University	5
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	5
Open University	1
The Israeli Prison Rehabilitation Authority	1
The Open University of Israel	1
University of Haifa	3
Western Galilee Academic college	1
Zefat Academic College	1
Total of academics	28

University	Session	Topic
Ariel University	Addiction, substance abuse and their effects Fri, September 13, 8:00 to 9:15am	Differences in gambling addiction and substance use between people who gamble in illegal and legal settings in Israel
Ariel University	Victimology Working Group Panel 2 Consequences of Victimization Fri, September 13, 9:30 to 10:45am Mendelsohn's Archive and the Early Days of Victimology Thu, September 12, 2:30 to 3:45pm	Happiness, self-labeling, stress and fear of terrorism in the aftermath of national trauma Chair
Ariel University	Victimology Working Group Panel 2 Consequences of Victimization Fri, September 13, 9:30 to 10:45am,	Happiness, self-labeling, stress and fear of terrorism in the aftermath of national trauma
Ariel University	Cannabis and cannabinoids Fri, September 13, 2:00 to 3:15pm	Explaining medical cannabis diversion among medical cannabis license holders- a moderation model
Ariel University	Attitude towards Crime and Punishment Thu, September 12, 8:00 to 9:15am,	Insights into Non-Consensual Dissemination of Intimate Images: Perceptions of Victim and Offender Culpability
Ariel University	P108 Uncovering Gender Bias: How Legal Professionals Perceive Sexual Harassment Poster session 12/9 at 18:45	
Ariel University Zefat Academic College	Victimology Working Group Panel 2 Consequences of Victimization Fri, September 13, 9:30 to 10:45am,	Happiness, self-labeling, stress and fear of terrorism in the aftermath of national trauma
Ashkelon Academic College	Poster Session	P087 - Responsibility and Mitigated Punishment for Homicide Crimes – To What

University	Session	Topic
	Types of homicides: A global perspective Sat, September 14, 9:30 to 10:45am	Extent Did the Reform Change? Intimate Partner Homicide and Honor Family Homicide — The Similarities and Differences
Ashkelon Academic College	Poster Session	P087 - Responsibility and Mitigated Punishment for Homicide Crimes – To What Extent Did the Reform Change?
Ashkelon Academic College	Policing, social control and crime prevention Thu, September 12, 4:00 to 5:15pm	The outbreak of lethal violence in the absence of up-to-date social control
Ashkelon Academic College	Policing, social control and crime prevention Thu, September 12, 4:00 to 5:15pm Types of homicides: A global perspective Sat, September 14, 9:30 to 10:45am	The outbreak of lethal violence in the absence of up-to-date social control Intimate Partner Homicide and Honor Family Homicide — The Similarities and Differences
Bar-Ilan University	Prison Working Group: Social work in prison and innovative approaches to rehabilitation Fri, September 13, 2:00 to 3:15pm EUROC 13 White-collar and corporate offender profiles Thu, September 12, 4:00 to 5:15pm	Voices behind bars: Rehabilitation processes among broadcasters in prison radio White Collars, Dark Histories: The Factors That Lead Women to Commit Corporate Crimes
Bar-Ilan university	Poster Session	P083 - Reframing Powerlessness in Addiction Recovery Processes: A Positive Criminology Perspective

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Bar-Ilan University Ashkelon Academic College	Prison Working Group: Social work in prison and innovative approaches to rehabilitation Fri, September 13, 2:00 to 3:15pm	Voices behind bars: Rehabilitation processes among broadcasters in prison radio
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Common and Less Common Youth Crimes: Examples from Israel, Greece, Poland, Spain & UK Fri, September 13, 9:30 to 10:45am,	Just as Violent: Cyberbullying and In-Person Violence Compared Among Arab Youth in Israel
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Common and Less Common Youth Crimes: Examples from Israel, Greece, Poland, Spain & UK Fri, September 13, 9:30 to 10:45am, Youth Delinquency: Correlates and Trends Thu, September 12, 1:00 to 2:15pm,	Just as Violent: Cyberbullying and In-Person Violence Compared Among Arab Youth in Israel Gender Discrimination towards Female Arab Teenagers in Israel and Their Involvement in Severe Violence: The Mediating Role of Closeness to Parents
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Insights from Mendelsohn's Archives: Past, Present, and Future Thu, September 12, 1:00 to 2:15pm	Chair
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Victimology Working Group Panel 1 Consequences of Victimization Fri, September 13, 5:00 to 6:15pm	Role perceptions of educators of preschoolers regarding community violence and sociocultural trauma in Arab-Palestinian society in Israel

University	Session	Topic
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Mendelsohn's Archive and the Early Days of Victimology Thu, September 12, 2:30 to 3:45pm	Chair
Open University	"Navigating Cyber Challenges: Adolescent Online Victimization and Its Implications" Fri, September 13, 9:30 to 10:45am,	Exploring adolescents online victimization in relation to parent-child interactions
The Israeli Prison Rehabilitation Authority	EUROC 13 White-collar and corporate offender profiles Thu, September 12, 4:00 to 5:15pm	White Collars, Dark Histories: The Factors That Lead Women to Commit Corporate Crimes
The Open University of Israel	"Navigating Cyber Challenges: Adolescent Online Victimization and Its Implications" Fri, September 13, 9:30 to 10:45am,	Exploring adolescents online victimization in relation to parent-child interactions
University of Haifa	Poster Session	P087 - Responsibility and Mitigated Punishment for Homicide Crimes – To What Extent Did the Reform Change?
University of Haifa	Gender-Based Violence and Victimization in Diverse Contexts Thu, September 12, 9:30 to 10:45am	The streets were dark with something more than night: Predicting risky sexual behaviors and victimization among young females seeking detoxification
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University	Session	Topic
Western Galilee Academic college	Insights from Mendelsohn's Archives: Past, Present, and Future Thu, September 12, 1:00 to 2:15pm	Roundtable