

Dear deans, faculty boards, program directors, professors, lecturers, PhD candidates, researchers, and staff members of Tilburg University,

Today, we continue with our daily lives while the Palestinian people of Gaza are being mercilessly and systematically [murdered](#),<sup>1</sup> [forcibly displaced](#),<sup>2</sup> [ethnically cleansed](#)<sup>3</sup> and [starved](#)<sup>4</sup> by Israel, its state, military and security apparatuses, and complicit public and private sectors of society. Plainly stated, Israel is committing the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people.

## Introduction

As of the 19th of February 2024, and since October 7th, 2023, Israel has killed 28,775 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. These include more than 12,300 children, and 8,400 women. Nearly 70,000 people are injured.<sup>5</sup> Israeli historian and professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Raz Segal, has described Israel's war on Gaza as a [textbook case of genocide](#).<sup>6</sup> Craig Mokhiber, a Director in the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and a lawyer and specialist in international human rights law, policy and methodology, who resigned in protest of the UN's treatment of Israel's genocide, [stated the following](#): "Usually the most difficult part of proving genocide is intent because there has to be an intention to destroy in whole, or in part, a particular group. In this case, the intent by Israeli leaders has been so explicitly stated and publicly stated – by the prime minister, by the president, by senior cabinet ministers, by military leaders – that that is an easy case to make. It's on the public record."<sup>7</sup>

As academics, we believe that we must refer to legal authorities and experts for guidance on such deeply impactful legal classifications, such as the one of genocide to describe Israel's war on Gaza. We direct you to the Application Of The Convention On The Prevention And Punishment Of The Crime Of Genocide In The Gaza Strip ([South Africa V. Israel](#)),<sup>8</sup> the high profile case brought by South Africa to the International Court of Justice, accusing Israel of the crime of genocide. As has been widely publicized, the judges of the world's highest court have concluded that Israel is plausibly committing genocide, and compelled Israel to take all measures to protect Palestinian civilians in compliance with the Genocide Convention. In fact, only 15 days after the ICJ ruling, the Israeli army had killed over 1,864 Palestinians—including 690 children and 441 women—and injured over 2,933 more.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.euronews.com/2024/02/10/gaza-death-toll-passes-28000-palestinian-authorities>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nrc.no/news/2023/december/gaza-displacement/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-29/ty-article/.premium/ethnic-cleansing-in-gods-name-the-only-israelis-with-a-plan-for-the-day-after-in-gaza/0000018d-55e0-d997-adff-ddfa9b490000>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.btselem.org/gaza\\_strip/20240108\\_israel\\_is\\_starving\\_gaza](https://www.btselem.org/gaza_strip/20240108_israel_is_starving_gaza)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

<sup>6</sup> <https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/2/qa-former-un-official-craig-mokhiber-on-gaza-and-genocide>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6147/Fifteen-days-after-ICJ-ruling,-Israel%E2%80%99s-genocide-in-Gaza-Strip-continues-on-the-same-scale>

You may ask why we are approaching you with this open letter and with this call. We strongly believe that we have a special and unique legal and moral obligation to ensure justice, especially to those who are denied it. These responsibilities extend to us as academics, believers in human rights and international law. This is why today, and in accordance with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, we call on Tilburg University and all of you as its faculty members to enact a full academic boycott of Israel and its academic institutions.

In fact, we call on you to follow the brilliant example set by the Law Faculty at the University of Antwerp, which cut its ties with its partner Israeli university. Here is an excerpt from the Law Faculty's [statement](#): "The Law Faculty Council based its detailed decision on a three-step reasoning. Independent United Nations assessments established multiple violations of international humanitarian law by the Israeli defence forces in Gaza. Secondly, the highest authorities at Bar-Ilan University expressed unwavering support for the military action. Thirdly, the Law Faculty in Antwerp had the responsibility to desist from promoting institutional cooperation with Bar-Ilan University in these circumstances with a view to upholding the respect of international law."<sup>10</sup>

### **Ties between Israeli universities and academic institutions Tilburg University is partnered with and the Israeli state, military, and security apparatus**

While we at Palestine Solidarity Tilburg do not have access to information on the full extent of the ties between Tilburg University and Israeli institutions, we do know of the student exchange programs active with three Israeli universities throughout all schools of Tilburg University - these are the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Reichman University (formerly IDC Herzliya) and the aforementioned Bar-Ilan University.

In an effort to provide you with the full picture, we will outline what we believe is damning evidence of these three universities' complicity in Israel's current genocide of the Palestinian people.

1. Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI)
  - a. One of the Hebrew University's campuses is itself an extension of illegal Israeli occupation, with its buildings standing on land seized by Israel in the 6 day war of 1967 in East Jerusalem,<sup>11</sup> land internationally recognized as occupied by Israel. East Jerusalem is considered inseparable from the rest of the occupied territories by numerous UN resolutions and international legal experts.<sup>12</sup> In the past, respected legal scholars and academics, including John Dugard, George Abi-Saab, and Richard Falk,

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-groups/law-and-development/news-and-events/bar-ilan/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://palestinecampaign.org/psc-company/hebrew-university-of-jerusalem/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/10/commission-inquiry-finds-israeli-occupation-unlawful-under-international-law>

have [signed](#) open letters calling on academic conferences to boycott the Hebrew University for this reason.<sup>13</sup>

- b. The Hebrew University won a tender in 2019 to host the prestigious [Havatzalot program](#),<sup>14</sup> a military program run by the Israel Defence Forces. In fact, it is the flagship program of Aman, Israel's Military Intelligence Directorate.<sup>15</sup> The program, which mostly takes place on the campus of the Hebrew University (sometimes in the program's own closed base conditions compound), aims to recruit highly trained intelligence officers for Aman, providing them with academic, intelligence and military training - including combat training. [From a news article on the program](#): "According to Haaretz, the tender stipulates that students wear their IDF uniform and carry their personal firearm on campus. The university will also have to provide the military with the personal information about university staff, including admission and maintenance personnel, security guards and sub-contractors."<sup>16</sup>
- c. The Hebrew University also hosts the [Talpiot program](#),<sup>17</sup> a highly selective military program, preparing elite soldiers for work in technological research and development as well as military leadership. The program takes place under the auspices of the Hebrew University, and candidates wear Israeli Air Force uniforms on campus, studying physics, mathematics and computer science courses. Talpiot graduates are at the forefront of weapons development for the Israeli military, weapons that are later used on innocent civilians in Gaza. In fact, the IDF [boasted on its own website](#) about Talpiot graduates from the Hebrew University taking part in active combat in Khan Younis, Gaza, during the current genocidal war on Gaza.<sup>18</sup>
- d. Yissum, the technology transfer company of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, conducts joint research with Lockheed Martin, the aerospace and defense manufacturer responsible for arming the Israeli military during its current genocide. One of the specific products built and delivered by Lockheed Martin to the Israeli military is the F-35 jet. We note this jet specifically as recently, a [Dutch court has ordered](#) the Dutch government to halt the export of F-35 parts from its air base in Woensdrecht to Israel. From the judgment: "The court ruled that there is a clear risk that serious violations of humanitarian law of war are committed in the Gaza Strip with Israel's F-35 fighter planes. Israel does not take sufficient account of the

<sup>13</sup> <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/11/23/statement-against-holding-esil-at-the-hebrew-university/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.havatzalot.org/>

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.mod.gov.il/Society\\_Economy/articles/Pages/14.4.19.aspx](https://www.mod.gov.il/Society_Economy/articles/Pages/14.4.19.aspx)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/jerusalem-hebrew-university-to-host-military-intelligence-program-586822>

<sup>17</sup> <https://catalog.huji.ac.il/pages/WebChugInfoNew.aspx?year=2020&faculty=2&entityId=520&degreeCode=71&language=en>

<sup>18</sup>

<https://www.idf.il/%D7%90%D7%AA%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%99%D7%97%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94/%D7%9B%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%99%D7%96%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%9B%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%9C%D7%A4%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%AA%D7%9C%D7%A4%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%97%D7%99%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%90%D7%95%D7%95%D7%99%D7%A8-%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%A1-%D7%9E%D7%A1%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%9C-%D7%98%D7%A7%D7%A1-%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9D-%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94-%D7%AA%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%A2%D7%96%D7%94/>

consequences for the civilian population when conducting its attacks. Israel's attacks have caused a disproportionate number of civilian casualties, including thousands of children.”<sup>19</sup>

- e. Unit 8200, Israel's signals intelligence unit, akin to the British GCHQ or the American NSA, recruits directly from the Hebrew University's Secondary School, also known as Leyada.<sup>20</sup>
  - f. During the current genocidal Israeli war on Gaza, the Hebrew University has expressed its full support. From its international website: “Support for the Military: The University provided diverse logistics equipment to several military units.”<sup>21</sup> It also makes sure to play its own role in this genocide, by supporting student reserve soldiers currently fighting in Gaza financially, legally, and with their academics, providing exam breaks or credit cuts.<sup>22</sup> In fact, and by the Hebrew University's own proud admission, “A unit of the Home Front Command is hosted in the university premises”.<sup>23</sup>
2. Bar-Ilan University:
- a. The “[Section for Security Forces](#)” at Bar-Ilan University is a department specialized in providing education to the security forces of the Israeli state. According to the program's own website: “The Department for the Defense Forces maintains a variety of study programs intended mainly for members of the Defense Forces, the IDF, the Police, government ministries and defense industries.”<sup>24</sup>
  - b. Bar-Ilan University's computer science department has developed algorithms for unmanned vehicles and robots to be used by the Israeli military - “we will be able to place robots on our security fences - at IDF bases and even on the state's border fences”.<sup>25</sup>
  - c. Bar-Ilan University coordinates the LAW-TRAIN project, in collaboration with the Israeli Ministry of National Security and the Israeli National Police.<sup>26</sup> The Israeli National Police and the Israeli Prison Service, coordinated by the aforementioned ministry, have been accused by Amnesty International of brutal acts of torture against Palestinian detainees.<sup>27</sup> During the course of the current genocide, Israeli police took part in the storming of a Palestinian hospital in the West Bank, murdering three

<sup>19</sup>

<https://www.rechtspraak.nl/Organisatie-en-contact/Organisatie/Gerechtshoven/Gerechtshof-Den-Haag/Nieuws/Paginas/Nederland-moet-de-uitvoer-van-F-3-5-onderdelen-naar-Israel-stoppen.aspx>

<sup>20</sup> <https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/Cyber-Reports-2019-12-Unit-8200.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> [https://international.huji.ac.il/support\\_and\\_assistance\\_during\\_war](https://international.huji.ac.il/support_and_assistance_during_war)

<sup>22</sup>

<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%94%D7%A7%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%AA%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%90%D7%A7%D7%93%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA>

<sup>23</sup> <https://new.huji.ac.il/%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%97%D7%96%D7%99%D7%AA>

<sup>24</sup> <https://mzb.biu.ac.il/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.hayadan.org.il/robot-patrol-0806085>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.eccpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/LAWTRAINEU.pdf>

<sup>27</sup>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/israel-opt-horrifying-cases-of-torture-and-degrading-treatment-of-palestinian-detainees-amid-spike-in-arbitrary-arrests/>

Palestinians inside the hospital. UN experts believe this action may amount to extrajudicial killing and a war crime.<sup>28</sup>

- d. Bar-Ilan University has in the past set up separate or semi-connected academic institutions. Two of these are worth highlighting:
  - i. Ariel University: Originally founded in 1982 as a branch of Bar-Ilan University and later detached, the University is located in Ariel, an Israeli settlement in the West Bank.<sup>29</sup> Like all other Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Ariel is internationally recognized as being illegal under international law.<sup>30</sup>
  - ii. Zefat Academic College is a public college in Safed established by Bar-Ilan University and later accredited independently. Zefat College hosts a special shortened degree program for members of the Shin Bet, Israel's feared internal intelligence apparatus.<sup>31</sup> Israeli journalist Gideon Levy describes Bar-Ilan University as such; "Bar-Ilan deserves the title of the most militaristic university of them all - it offers a plethora of programs for the security forces only", because of programs such as these.
- e. Incidents involving Bar-Ilan University professors - professors who may even be teaching Tilburg University students on exchange there:
  - i. Bar-Ilan University has been known to allow racist and sexist speech from its own professors. For example, Dr. Mordechai Kedar, a professor at Bar-Ilan, stated that "The only thing that can deter terrorists, like those who kidnapped the children and killed them, is the knowledge that their sister or their mother will be raped."<sup>32</sup> This professor, who publicly promoted the rape of the mothers and sisters of Palestinians, who he refers to as terrorists, is still to this day a professor at Bar-Ilan University.
  - ii. Bar-Ilan University's professors even go so far as openly promoting the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their homeland. Joel Roskin, a professor in the Department of Geography, published an [opinion in the Jerusalem Post](#) on the 27th of December 2023, in the midst of a genocide, titled "Why moving to the Sinai peninsula is the solution for Gaza's Palestinians". In it, he openly advocates for the removal of all Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and their resettlement in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt.<sup>33</sup>
  - iii. Professor Chaim Noy, the head of the Communications Department at Bar-Ilan University, was seen protesting against the crimes of the Israeli military in Gaza, causing uproar at the University. The University's administration

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israels-alleged-undercover-killings-occupied-west-bank-hospital-may-amount>

<sup>29</sup> <https://electronicintifada.net/content/academic-boycott-shin-bet-training-program-highlights-academic-complicity-occupation/5988>

<sup>30</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/1682640.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1682640.stm)

<sup>31</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20080911122101/http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1018912.html>

<sup>32</sup>

<https://archive.is/20220614092647/https://www.haaretz.com/2014-07-22/ty-article/.premium/profs-words-on-stopping-terror-draws-ire/0000017f-dc6d-d856-a37f-fdedef790000#selection-941.0-941.164>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-779510>

responded with the following statement: “The university administration condemns Prof. Noy’s actions and is considering taking steps against him. A demonstration against Israel’s right to defend itself and against IDF soldiers goes against the university’s values, especially at a time when IDF soldiers, including many of our students, they risk their lives for the security and future of the State of Israel.”<sup>34</sup>

- f. Bar-Ilan University has dedicated 3.3 million USD to providing scholarships to students called up for military service in Gaza.<sup>35</sup> This support for soldiers goes beyond finances. As part of the “Academic Vest”, soldiers are entitled to absence from classes, postponement in submission of works and projects, recognition of reserve service as an activity entitling to academic credits, extraordinary exam dates and study help.<sup>36</sup>
3. Reichman University (formerly known as the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya):
    - a. Reichman University operates an active war propaganda room. Titled the “[Public Diplomacy \(“Hasbara”\) Situation Room](#)”, Reichman advertises this project as a form of “university community mobilization in times of war”. The room engages, by its own admission, in spreading “Hasbara”, a term used to describe information disseminated to support the narrative and policy goals of the Israeli state - essentially a propaganda room. The room takes part in activities such as “driving home the message that “ Hamas=ISIS” and “enhancing the pro-Israel presence in “talkbacks” throughout social media”.<sup>37</sup> The room’s description ends with a recognition that “indifference is not an option”. We agree, we cannot be indifferent about a genocide, and must stand against it, in the same manner in which Reichman, a university we are openly partnered with, works in support of genocide. In a [video](#) published on its official Youtube channel, Reichman University prides itself as a “Zionist university” that “embraces the security forces and the reservists, including during routine times”. The [video](#) also shows clips from the war propaganda room, describing “very high rates of exposure and influence”.<sup>38</sup>
    - b. Reichman University’s own vision states: “Reichman University is committed to the fundamental values of a free and tolerant society, while maintaining a Zionist philosophy – first and foremost, freedom of the individual for self-realization in all realms of thought and action, while striving to strengthen the State of Israel.”<sup>39</sup>
    - c. Reichman University boasts of its “Research institutes at the forefront of Israel advocacy”. One of these institutes, The Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS), is deeply involved and entrenched in the Israeli security sphere:

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/education/article/14992446>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.biu.ac.il/article/23611>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.biu.ac.il/page/23457>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.runi.ac.il/en/students/rights-of-reservists/the-mobilization-of-the-university-in-the-iron-swords-war-en/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-123q7aSP4>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.runi.ac.il/en/about/vision/>



- i. The Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) hosts the Herzliya Conference, a conference of Israeli military generals, intelligence officials, politicians and foreign diplomats and dignitaries to discuss military and political developments in Israel. Many of these attendees and participants are actively partaking in the brutal bombardment, siege, and genocide of the Gaza Strip, as well as in the upholding of the apartheid regime imposed on the Palestinian people. Speakers include:
  - a. Isaac Herzog, President of the State of Israel. Recently claimed that there are no innocent civilians in Gaza.<sup>40</sup>
  - b. Maj. Gen. (res.) Yoav Gallant, Israeli Minister of Defense. Described Palestinians as “human animals” and ordered a complete siege on Gaza: “there will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed”.<sup>41</sup>
  - c. Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, Chief of the General Staff, IDF.
  - d. MK Lt. Gen. (res.) Benny Gantz Former Minister of Defense of Israel; Former IDF Chief of General Staff. Gantz has threatened to invade Rafah, at the very south of the Gaza Strip where over 1.4 million Palestinians seek refuge after their displacement.<sup>42</sup> UN experts say a “Rafah invasion would be a disaster beyond imagination”.<sup>43</sup>
- d. Reichman University’s campus is built on top of an old Israeli air force base. In fact, the base was active in 1948, during the Arab-Israeli war.<sup>44</sup> The Nakba, the violent ethnic cleansing and dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, occurred at the same time as this military base’s activity. Reichman University prides itself on formerly being an army base,<sup>45</sup> one that may have been complicit in the ethnic cleansing of Palestine.<sup>46</sup>
- e. Scholarships related to the military:
  - i. [Iron Swords Scholarship Fund](#): Reichman University has established a special fund to address the current war. The scholarship provides financial aid to “students serving in the reserves, or the security and rescue forces, who have been substantially impacted financially due to their enlistment”.<sup>47</sup>
  - ii. [IDF Military aid](#):<sup>48</sup>

<sup>40</sup> <https://thewire.in/world/northern-gaza-israel-palestine-conflict>

<sup>41</sup> [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/)

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gantz-israel-will-invade-rafah-if-hostages-not-returned-by-ramadan/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146522>

<sup>44</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20170315175212/http://news.walla.co.il/item/384730>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.runi.ac.il/en/about/visit/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.nad.ps/en/publication-resources/faqs/massacres-lydd-lod-and-ramle-during-1948-nakba>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.runi.ac.il/en/students/rights-of-reservists/iron-swords-scholarship-fund/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.runi.ac.il/en/schools/rris/admissions/undergraduate/financial-aid-and-scholarships/>

- IMPACT Scholarship: “open to former Israeli combat soldiers (rank that is lower than captain “סר”ן), who are Israel’s future leaders. The scholarship is a needs based scholarship for soldiers that have completed full army service, beginning his/her first or second year of studies.”
- HESEG: “Preference will be given to candidates who are recognized by HESEG as lone soldiers, who have come to Israel to volunteer in the IDF.” Note: Lone soldiers are IDF soldiers with no family in Israel to support them. Around half of these lone soldiers are immigrants from abroad who traveled to Israel specifically to fight in the IDF.<sup>49</sup>
- The Joseph S. & Caroline Gruss Life Monument Fund for Assistance to I.D.F. Ex-servicemen: “the Gruss Fund has chosen to focus its scholarship program on particular target groups such as lone soldiers, residents of the periphery, haredi ex-servicemen, minorities and new immigrants.”
- Mimadim LeLimudim: Scholarship from the Ministry of Defense “from uniform to school ממדים ללימודים - "שאלות ותשובות" (mod.gov.il).

### **Complicity of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Bar-Ilan University and Reichman University in genocide, ethnic cleansing, and occupation**

As thoroughly detailed in the above description of these three Israeli universities’ ties to the Israeli military, security, police and intelligence sectors of the Israeli state, Israeli universities are inseparable from the Israeli state and military’s crimes and genocide in Gaza. Their research projects arm the Israeli military with new, innovative technologies live-tested and used on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Their specialized programs for members of the Israeli military, police, and intelligence services, birth and develop new generations of Israeli soldiers and spies, who apply their skills and expertise gained at these universities to further the occupation of Palestine and the oppression of the Palestinian people. Their tolerance of openly racist, sexist, and genocidal professors, as well as their proud hosting of Israeli politicians, statesmen, and military leaders currently engaged in genocide in Gaza, showcases their indifference to the death of Palestinians. In fact, calling it indifferent does not do it justice, as these universities are in open and full support of the Israeli military’s barbarism in Gaza, providing technical and logistical support to Israel’s public media narrative as well as financial aid to soldiers, perpetrators of genocide, fighting in Gaza. The very presence of these universities on occupied, stolen land, from which Palestinians were violently ethnically cleansed, and where Israeli military bases and brigades are hosted today, is more than enough cause for a complete boycott of these universities. Their active complicity and partaking in genocide is, for us, the last straw.

<sup>49</sup> <https://lonesoldiercenter.com/about-us/who-are-lone-soldiers/>



## Scholasticide in Gaza

As part of its genocidal war on Gaza, Israel had launched a brutal campaign targeting Gaza's academic and educational sector. According to the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, Israel has killed 94 university professors, along with hundreds of teachers and thousands of students, as of the 20th of January.<sup>50</sup> Israel has also systematically destroyed every single university in Gaza. "Israel has bombed all of the enclave's 11 universities since Oct. 7, 2023: Islamic University of Gaza, Al-Azhar University, Al-Quds Open University, University College of Applied Sciences, University of Palestine, Israa University, University of Gaza, Al-Aqsa University, Palestine Technical College, Palestine College of Nursing, and Arab College of Applied Sciences."<sup>51</sup> This bombing campaign has deprived around 9,000 university students of their current and future higher education.



This image depicts Israel's controlled detonation of Israa University, in the south of Gaza City, on the 17th of January 2024.<sup>52</sup> The Israeli military used the university as a military base for weeks before its complete destruction.<sup>53</sup> It used 315 mines detonated simultaneously to completely destroy the building.

As academics, we cannot turn a blind eye to Israel's complete destruction of academia in Gaza. Israel's destruction of universities is deliberate and calculated. Universities are havens of learning and personal and generational growth, and in the context of its genocide, Israel seeks to close any avenues of learning and academic development for Palestinians, targeting not only their current lives but their futures too.

## Demands

We call on Tilburg University as an institution, and you as its faculty members, to uphold the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)'s Guidelines for the International Academic Boycott of Israel. We recognize that not all sections of the Guidelines are applicable to the situation at Tilburg University, and therefore call upon you to implement the relevant sections.

The PACBI guidelines call for a full and comprehensive boycott of the following:<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6108/Israel-kills-dozens-of-academics,-destroys-every-university-in-the-Gaza-Strip>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/education/-scholasticide-how-israel-is-systematically-destroying-palestinian-education-in-gaza/3135127>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/24/how-israel-has-destroyed-gazas-schools-and-universities>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68023080>

<sup>54</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/academic-boycott-guidelines>

1. Academic events (such as conferences, symposia, workshops, book and museum exhibits) convened or co-sponsored by Israel, complicit Israeli institutions or their support and lobby groups in various countries.
2. Research and development activities that fall into these broad categories:
  - a. Among academic institutions – Institutional cooperation agreements with Israeli universities or research institutes.
  - b. Among the Israeli government and other governments or foundations/institutions.
  - c. Among corporations and academic institutions – Research and development activities on behalf of international corporations involving contracts or other institutional agreements with departments or centers at Israeli universities.
3. Funding from Israel or its lobby groups to academic activities/projects.
4. Addresses and talks at international venues by, as well as debates with, Israeli state officials or official representatives of Israeli academic institutions such as presidents, rectors or deans.
- 5. Study abroad schemes in Israel for international students.**
6. Special academic honors or recognition granted to Israeli officials, representatives of Israeli academic institutions (such as the bestowal of honorary degrees and other awards) or to Israeli academic or research institutions.
7. Normalization Projects.
8. Institutional membership of Israeli associations in world bodies.
9. Publishing in or refereeing articles for academic journals based at Israeli universities or published in collaboration with Israeli institutions, or granting permission to reprint material published elsewhere in such Israel-based journals.
10. Serving as external reviewers for dissertations, writing recommendations or other forms of refereeing such as advising on hiring, promotion, tenure, and grant-making decisions at Israeli universities .
11. International students enrolling in or international faculty teaching or conducting research at degree or non-degree programs at an Israeli institution.
12. All academic visits or fact-finding missions that receive funding from Israel, its complicit institutions or its international lobby groups.

The full [Guidelines](https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/academic-boycott-guidelines), expanded on in more detail, can be found here - <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/academic-boycott-guidelines>

## Conclusion

Future generations will reflect on these times with grief, but also with judgment. History will judge our individual, societal and institutional positions and actions in relation to the ongoing genocide in Gaza. We can no longer detach ourselves from the situation, deny responsibility, or ignore our own

institution's complicity in the systematic murder of tens of thousands of Palestinians at the hands of a fascist settler colony, slowly but surely becoming a global pariah state.

Boycotts by Dutch academic institutions would not be a new phenomenon either. Dutch universities have a [history of boycotting South African universities](#)<sup>55</sup> in order to pressure the South African state during the apartheid regime. Dutch universities also enacted [a full boycott of Russian universities](#) and academic institutions following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.<sup>56</sup> A boycott of Israeli institutions would follow in this path of Dutch institutions standing up for international law and human rights, a position which we cannot decide to apply selectively.

Therefore, and in light of the ongoing genocide, the murder of tens of thousands, the ICJ ruling in favor of the plausibility of genocide in Gaza, dozens of legal, genocide and holocaust scholars declaring the situation in Gaza a genocide, and the full complicity of Israeli universities and academic institutions,<sup>57</sup> we call on Tilburg University to immediately enact a full, comprehensive boycott of Israel, in accordance with the PACBI Guidelines for an academic boycott of Israel.

Sincerely, and in solidarity,

**Palestine Solidarity Tilburg**



<sup>55</sup> <https://universonline.nl/nieuws/2023/11/07/israeli-palestinian-conflict-tilburg-university-cannot-look-away/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://dub.uu.nl/en/news/netherlands-about-end-academic-collaboration-russia>

<sup>57</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/files/2011/02/EOO23-24-Web.pdf>