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## Exclusive: Google Contract Shows Deal With Israel Defense Ministry



Hundreds of protestors gather in front of Google's San Francisco offices, demanding an end to its work with the Israeli government, and to protest Israeli attacks on Gaza, on Dec. 14, 2023. Tayfun Coskun—Anadolu/Getty Images

Google provides cloud computing services to the Israeli Ministry of Defense, and the tech giant has negotiated deepening its partnership during Israel's war in Gaza, a company document viewed by TIME shows.

The Israeli Ministry of Defense, according to the document, has its own “landing zone” into Google Cloud—a secure entry point to Google-provided computing infrastructure, which would allow the ministry to store and process data, and access AI services.

The ministry sought consulting assistance from Google to expand its Google Cloud access, seeking to allow “multiple units” to access automation technologies, according to a draft contract dated March 27, 2024. The contract shows Google billing the Israeli Ministry of Defense over \$1 million for the consulting service.

The version of the contract viewed by TIME was not signed by Google or the Ministry of Defense. But a March 27 comment on the document, by a Google employee requesting an executable copy of the contract, said the signatures would be “completed offline as it’s an Israel/Nimbus deal.” Google also gave the ministry a 15% discount on the original price of consulting fees as a result of the “Nimbus framework,” the document says.

Project Nimbus is a controversial \$1.2 billion cloud computing and AI agreement between the Israeli government and two tech companies: Google and Amazon. [Reports](#) in the Israeli press have previously indicated that Google and Amazon are contractually barred from preventing specific arms of the Israeli state using their technology under Project Nimbus. But this is the first time the existence of a contract showing that the Israeli Ministry of Defense is a Google Cloud customer has been made public.

Google recently described its work for the Israeli government as largely for civilian purposes. “We have been very clear that the Nimbus contract is for workloads running on our commercial platform by Israeli government ministries such as finance, healthcare, transportation, and education,” a Google spokesperson told TIME for a [story](#) published on April 8. “Our work is not directed at highly sensitive or classified military workloads relevant to weapons or intelligence services.”

Contacted on April 10 with questions about the Ministry of Defense contract, a Google spokesperson declined to comment further.

**Read More:** [\*Exclusive: Google Workers Revolt Over \\$1.2 Billion Contract With Israel\*](#)

The news comes after recent [reports](#) in the Israeli media have alleged the country’s military, controlled by the Ministry of Defense, is using an AI-powered system to select targets for air-strikes on Gaza. Such an AI system would likely require cloud computing infrastructure to function. The Google contract seen by TIME does not specify for what military applications, if any, the Ministry of Defense uses Google Cloud, and there is no evidence Google Cloud technology is being used for targeting purposes. But Google employees who spoke with

TIME said the company has little ability to monitor what customers, especially sovereign nations like Israel, are doing on its cloud infrastructure.

The Israeli Ministry of Defense did not respond to requests for comment.

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The Israeli Ministry of Defense’s attempt to onboard more units to Google Cloud is described in the contract as “phase 2” of a wider project to build out the ministry’s cloud architecture.

The document does not explicitly describe phase one, but does refer to earlier work carried out by Google on behalf of the ministry. The ministry, the contract says, “has [already] established a Google Cloud Landing Zone infrastructure as part of their overall cloud strategy and to enable [the Ministry of Defense] to move applications to Google Cloud Platform.”

For “phase 2” of the project, the contract says, the Ministry of Defense “is looking to enable its Landing Zone to serve multiple units and sub-units. Therefore, [the Ministry of Defense] would like to create several different automation modules within their Landing Zone based on Google’s leading practices for the benefit of different units, with proper processes to support, and to implement leading practices for security and governance architecture using Google tools.”

The consulting services on offer by Google are for the tech company to “assist with architecture design, implementation guidance, and automation” for the Ministry of Defense’s Google Cloud landing zone, the contract says. The estimated start date is April 14, and Google’s consulting services are expected to take one calendar year to complete.

Two Google workers have resigned in the last month in protest against Project Nimbus, TIME [previously reported](#).

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