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How western Big Tech giants enable Israel's occupation

Hewlett Packard, Motorola, and other western tech conglomerates have been deeply involved in providing the technological infrastructure that supports Israeli apartheid and settler colonialism. This is how they profit from the oppression of Palestinians.

On 10 July, Hebrew newspaper [Maariv](#) reported that 46,000 Israeli businesses have been forced to shut down due to the ongoing Gaza war and its devastating effect on the economy. The outlet referred to Israel as a “country in collapse.”

Regular readers of [The Cradle](#) will be well aware of the scale of the occupation state’s [economic collapse](#) since the Gaza genocide began. Yet, its effect on the [precipitous decline](#) of Tel Aviv’s once-thriving tech sector remains underexplored.

Complicity in occupation infrastructure

In mid-June, mainstream news outlets [reported](#) that chip giant Intel was halting expansion of a major factory project in Israel, which was slated to pump an extra \$15 billion into the occupation entity’s economy.

Intel is just one tech giant whose fortunes have soured since Palestinian freedom fighters breached Gaza’s concentration camp walls on 7 October 2023.

The same fate has been suffered by multiple consumer-facing tech companies profiteering from illegal Zionist settlement expansion, which also provide infrastructure and resources used to oppress Palestinians and enforce Tel Aviv’s apartheid.

This week, the [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\) ruled](#) that Israel's continued presence in occupied Palestinian territory is unlawful and should come to an end “as rapidly as possible.” Notably, the court opened the door to “reparations” for any illegal actions carried out by Israel and other entities since 1967.

Multiple consumer-facing western tech companies that not only profit from illegal Jewish settlement expansion but actively provide core infrastructure and resources used to oppress Palestinians and enforce Tel Aviv's apartheid could now be subject to lawsuits.

The ICJ's landmark judgment means the long-term viability of these tech firms' operations in the occupied territories is moribund - for fear of legal repercussions, if nothing else.

Fittingly, given Germany is currently [in the dock](#) at the ICJ for its support and facilitation of the genocide in Gaza, Munich-headquartered tech conglomerate Siemens is among the culprits.

[The firm](#) is “focused on automation and digitalization in the manufacturing industries, intelligent infrastructure for buildings and distributed energy systems, smart mobility solutions for rail transport, and medical technology and digital healthcare services.” Its products are profuse throughout the occupation state and its illegal settlements.

Traffic control systems and traffic lights produced by Siemens can be found in areas of the West Bank where Palestinian residents are forbidden from traveling. In 2014, the company’s Israeli subdivision [RS Industries](#) won a tender to provide traffic control systems across the Jerusalem Municipality too - East Jerusalem, designated as the capital of the Palestinian state, was occupied in 1967, and falls within the ICJ's mandate.

Elsewhere, Siemens [provides](#) its DDEMU model cars for the Tel Aviv Jerusalem Fast Train and, in 2018, was awarded a \$1 billion contract by the entity-owned Israel Railways to supply 330 electric cars as part of Israel’s electrification project, which includes the Tel Aviv - Jerusalem Fast Train (A1).

A highly controversial project that passes through two areas of the West Bank, including privately owned, occupied Palestinian land, it is intended for exclusive use by Israeli Jews.

Don’t Buy Into Occupation (DBIO) states: “Siemens’ activities are of concern, as they are linked to the provision of services and utilities supporting the maintenance and existence of settlements.”

However, the company’s activities extend far further. Through its Israeli representative, [Orad Group](#), the company provides equipment and technology to the notorious Israel Prison Service (IPS).

[In 2004](#), the Orad Group provided a Siemens technology-based perimeter security system to Gilboa prison — a detention center specifically designated for Palestinian political prisoners. Siemens also supplies the IPS with a sophisticated fire detection and extinguishing system.

Connecting settlements

US brand Motorola is widely recognized for its innovative smartphone devices. However, DBIO has meticulously documented the [involvement](#) of Motorola's Tel Aviv division in settlement expansion over the past decade.

The tech giant has collaborated closely with Israeli occupation forces, the Ministry of Defense, and Zionist settlement councils across the illegally occupied territories. A prime example of this collaboration is the surveillance system "[MotoEagle](#)," designed to monitor settlers on appropriated land, operate within occupation military bases, and oversee the Gaza concentration camp's separation wall.

Notably, Motorola-produced radar stations have been installed on illegally appropriated private Palestinian land, restricting Palestinian movement in these areas. Furthermore, Motorola supplies the Ministry of Defense's Zramim System, a smart card operation utilized at Israeli checkpoints to monitor goods transportation.

Palestinian drivers, merchants, and transport companies are compelled to register their personal information in this system, enabling Tel Aviv to monitor all entry and exit points meticulously.

The company is also a preferred contractor for internal security systems in numerous occupation settlements. The Jordan Valley regional council, encompassing more than 20 settlements in the occupied West Bank, employs [multiple Motorola products](#), including command and control systems and surveillance cameras. Additionally, the Population and Immigration Authority in the settlement of Beitar Illit uses Motorola for its security needs.

In 2022, Motorola Solutions [secured a contract](#) to provide security cameras and entrance control resources for the Jerusalem Light Rail's (JLR) entire Green Line. This route links the Gilo settlement in occupied East Jerusalem with the city center and the Ramat Eshkol, Ma'alot Dafna, and French Hill settlements, facilitating connectivity between settler enclaves and supporting settler movement. Consequently, Motorola has been listed in the UN's [database of firms](#) profiting from illegal settlement expansion.

Powering apartheid

Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE), which split from personal computer and printer provider Hewlett Packard in 2015, is one of the most profitable US corporations. However, it is less well-known that HPE supplies and manages much of the technological infrastructure underpinning the occupation state's apartheid and settler colonialism.

For example, HPE provides "Itanium" servers and maintenance services to Tel Aviv's Population and Immigration Authority. This computerized Israel's checkpoint system while

storing vast amounts of information on all Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and non-citizen Palestinian residents of occupied East Jerusalem.

HPE directly contracts with the illegal settler municipalities of Modi'in Ilit and Ariel, two of the largest Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank, providing them with a range of services. Additionally, HPE maintains the central server system for the Israeli Prison Service (IPS), placing the company at the core of Tel Aviv's use of mass incarceration to suppress Palestinian resistance. A 1994 Human Rights Watch [report](#) highlighted this by noting:

“The extraction of confessions under duress, and the acceptance into evidence of such confessions by the military courts, form the backbone of Israel's military justice system.”

Moreover, HPE is the primary provider of the [Basel system](#), an automated biometric access control system employed at Israeli checkpoints and the Gaza apartheid wall. ID cards distributed under Basel are integral to the systematic discrimination against Palestinians.

The checkpoints, by design, segregate and fragment the Occupied Palestinian Territories and its inhabitants, separating workers from their places of employment, students from their schools, and families from each other through electrified fences, watchtowers, and concrete barriers.

Electronic counter intifada

This system is part of a broader state of siege under which Palestinians have lived for decades, significantly intensified by the sealing off of Gaza and the West Bank. The Israeli navy, another [HPE customer](#), relies on the company's IT infrastructure and support services. The siege severely restricts the movement of goods and people in and out of Palestinian territories, aiming explicitly to crush Palestinian resistance.

In 2006, Dov Weisglass, an adviser to then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, [explained](#): “The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger.” It was hoped hunger pangs through limited caloric intake might encourage Palestinians to reject Hamas or at least force its fighters to temper their resistance efforts. The [starvation of Palestinians](#) has only galvanized their support for Hamas and their yearning for freedom from Israeli occupation.

The occupation state failed to crush the Palestinian resistance via Operation Swords of Iron, an effort so catastrophic that even Israeli media has branded it a [“total defeat.”](#)

Following Iran's successful 14 April [retaliatory strikes against Israel](#), Tel Aviv's reign of impunity appears to be nearing its long-overdue end. It is only a matter of time before major

western tech firms like HPE, which facilitated the oppression of Palestinians, will face consequences for their complicity.

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This investigation is the second in a series at The Cradle that examines illegal investments by western corporations in the occupied Palestinian territories and/or that assist Israel in implementing its apartheid system. The first investigation can be [found here](#).