

# PSA

# *Palestinian Solidarity Action*

DEMANDS

FOR

AARHUS

UNIVERSITY

TRANSPARENCY

CUTTING  
EXISTING TIES

RIGOROUS  
ETHICAL SCREENING

OPEN DIALOGUE

SUPPORT PALESTINIAN  
STUDENTS

PUBLIC  
ANNOUNCEMENT

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DEMANDS

FOR

AARHUS

UNIVERSITY

# Table of content

<b>Table of content.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. PSA-Students' Demands to Aarhus University.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1. Transparency.....	2
1.2. Termination and/or Suspension of Existing Connections.....	3
1.3. Ethical Screening.....	4
1.4. Support for Palestinian Academia.....	5
1.5. Open Dialogue.....	7
1.6. Public Statement.....	7
<b>2. Presentation of Academic Boycott.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3. Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI).....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1. HUJI and Issawiya in Recent Times.....	14
3.2. HUJI Study Abroad through AU.....	16
<b>4. Terma.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5. Precedents at AU for Suspending International Collaboration.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>6. Guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Research for International Research and Innovation Collaborations.....</b>	<b>19</b>
6.1. Transparency According to Guidelines.....	19
6.2. Guidelines on Hostile Powers.....	19
6.3. The Havatzalot Program and HUJI.....	20
6.4. Political Research and Education at HUJI.....	21
<b>7. The Lack of Academic Freedom in Israel.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>8. Bibliography (sorted by chapters).....</b>	<b>24</b>
Presentation of demands.....	24
Presentation of Academic Boycott.....	26
Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI).....	27
Terma.....	28
Precedents at AU for Suspending International Collaboration.....	29
Guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Research for International Research and Innovation Collaborations.....	30
The Lack of Academic Freedom in Israel.....	30

# 1. PSA-Students' Demands to Aarhus University

## 1.1. Transparency

We demand:

- That AU exhibits transparency regarding their partnerships and investments.
- That AU exhibits transparency in the considerations and evaluations made when entering into partnerships.

To ensure the integrity of collaboration and exchange agreements for Aarhus University's students and staff, we demand that AU provides greater transparency when it comes to these partnerships, both financial and academic. This can be achieved through regularly updated systems that track existing connections and investments between AU and third parties, such as private companies and academic institutions. The University of Geneva [has already implemented such a system to monitor collaborations](#).<sup>1</sup> Likewise, University of Barcelona committed to establishing an online portal based on this model as part of [their extensive commitment to ethical academic conduct](#).<sup>2</sup>

Publicly accessible portfolios of capital managers can ensure this transparency regarding financial collaborators. Transparency regarding academic collaborations can be addressed by disclosing the evaluations that universities are required to undertake before entering into partnerships. Additionally, the publication of dates when partnerships are initiated and concluded can help students and staff gain insight into the nature of various partnerships the university may have. This demand for transparency is shared with and developed in collaboration with ["Academics in Denmark for Palestine"](#), a coalition of pro-Palestinian groups and individuals active across all Danish universities.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unige.ch/internationalrelations/en/partenariats-2/partnerships/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://web.ub.edu/en/web/actualitat/w/universitat-clama-per-la-pau>

<sup>3</sup> <https://academicsforpalestine.dk/>

## 1.2. Termination and/or Suspension of Existing Connections

We demand:

- That AU commits to not investing in companies listed in the OHCHR database.
- That AU conducts thorough ethical assessments and, in many cases, terminates existing collaborations with Israeli institutions and complicit third-parties.

Negotiations between the administration at the University of Copenhagen and its students, which led to KU's divestment process, were based on KU's active investments in companies listed in the OHCHR's annually updated database, which investigates and maps corporate complicity in the *[implications of Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of the Palestinian people in illegally occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem](#)*.<sup>4</sup>

A review of Aarhus University's investments and capital managers has not found any financial ties to companies listed in the OHCHR's database. However, this in itself is not enough, as we also want to ensure that this remains the case for future investments.

Therefore, we demand that Aarhus University commits to not investing in companies currently or in the future listed in the OHCHR's database and that AU holds its capital managers to the same standard. AU must dedicate itself to promoting and protecting universal human rights and ensuring that these rights are never neglected for financial gain. We further urge AU to adopt measures like those at the University of Copenhagen to ensure financial transparency and responsibility.

The academic and professional collaborations with the Israeli state are equally important, including exchange agreements, career partnerships, and research grants. In particular, collaboration and exchange agreements with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI; see the section on HUJI). and the Danish technology company Terma, which manufactures vital components for F-35 fighter jets currently being used in Israel's bombings of civilians in Gaza (see the section on Terma). We do not believe these collaborations are ethically or morally responsible, and entering into and maintaining them raises questions about the integrity of the university's own guidelines. It is necessary that such connections with complicit institutions do

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session31/database-hrc3136/23-06-30-Update-israeli-settlement-opt-database-hrc3136.pdf>

not exist. The conversation about ending these partnerships, and how Danish universities can collectively work towards this, must begin now and accelerate quickly. Therefore, we demand a thorough ethical evaluation and, in many cases, the termination of Aarhus University's existing collaborations with Israeli institutions and complicit third parties. The demand for termination and/or suspension of existing connections is shared with and developed in collaboration with ["Academics in Denmark for Palestine"](#).

### 1.3. Ethical Screening

We demand:

- That the processes for establishing academic collaborations be strengthened and made transparent.
- That AU adopts comprehensive ethical guidelines for non-monetary collaborations.

A crucial part of implementing the previously mentioned demands ("Transparency" and "Termination and/or Suspension of Existing Connections") involves strengthening and making the processes for evaluating academic collaborations transparent, so that problematic partnerships, such as with HUJI and Terma, cannot be established in the future. As previously mentioned, we demand that the ethical and moral considerations, as prescribed by URIS (Guidelines for international research and innovation cooperation), which universities must take into account before entering partnerships, be made publicly available. We know that AU is familiar with the URIS guidelines, as they have a committee responsible for implementing these guidelines (see section 6 for more information).<sup>5</sup> At the same time, we believe that overarching ethical and moral guidelines should be introduced for entering into non-monetary partnerships—something that already exists for monetary partnerships and investments.

We demand that collaborations with institutions and companies follow the overarching principles outlined in AU's investment policy, which states: "*Investments, regardless of the size of the return, must not be made at the expense of ethical responsibility.*"<sup>6</sup> In a 2021 statement on its

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<sup>5</sup> <https://medarbejdere.au.dk/administration/forskningspraksis/uris>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://medarbejdere.au.dk/administration/oekonomi/investeringspolitik>.

investment policy, AU declared that: "Fundamentally, investments must comply with general expectations of ethical standards, and at least twice a year Aarhus University's capital managers must screen investments for companies that violate international norms, including UN conventions dealing with human rights, labor rights, anti-corruption, controversial weapons, and environmental protection."<sup>7</sup>

By replacing the word "investments" with "collaboration agreements" in the above description, AU already has a solid foundation for performing and implementing ethical screenings of collaborators—both current and future. The demand for ethical screening is shared with and developed in collaboration with Academics in Denmark for Palestine.

## 1.4. Support for Palestinian Academia

We demand:

- That AU supports Palestinian-led initiatives for the rebuilding of the Palestinian university sector in Gaza—both materially and academically.
- That AU offers scholarships to Palestinian university students who are unable to complete their education due to the destruction in Gaza.
- That AU supports its current students who are affected by the war.

Since October 2023, all universities in Gaza have been closed due to complete or partial destruction following Israel's bombings.<sup>8</sup> UN experts assess that these attacks may have been deliberate in "an intentional effort to comprehensively destroy the Palestinian education system, an action known as 'scholasticide.'"<sup>9</sup> As a result, all university students in Gaza have lost an entire academic year, severely threatening Palestine's strong academic tradition. Additionally, as of April 18, 2024, 261 university educators and nearly 100 senior university staff members have been killed. This should alarm everyone, but especially Aarhus University, as it constitutes not

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<sup>7</sup>[https://medarbejdere.au.dk/fileadmin/www.medarbejdere.au.dk/oekonomi\\_bygninger/Investeringspolitik/Godkendt\\_investeringspolitik\\_D5760244\\_.pdf](https://medarbejdere.au.dk/fileadmin/www.medarbejdere.au.dk/oekonomi_bygninger/Investeringspolitik/Godkendt_investeringspolitik_D5760244_.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://theconversation.com/the-war-in-gaza-is-wiping-out-palestines-education-and-knowledge-systems-222055>; <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/gaza-students-future/>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>.

only an attack on AU's Palestinian colleagues but also on the practice of university education as a whole.

In January 2024, the World Bank estimated that it would cost \$341 million to rebuild Gaza's education sector.<sup>10</sup> Since January, the destruction of Gaza's infrastructure has only worsened, and while no new figures have been released regarding the cost of rebuilding Gaza's education sector, Bloomberg estimated in August that the total cost for Gaza's reconstruction could reach up to \$80 billion.<sup>11</sup> The material destruction in Gaza is incomprehensible in itself, but the impact and long-term consequences this could have on future Palestinian universities, students, academics, and knowledge production are also massive.

We demand that AU dedicates itself to supporting Palestinian-led initiatives to rebuild Gaza's education sector. If financial support is not possible, we expect AU to prioritize supporting initiatives that contribute to the physical and academic rebuilding of Palestinian universities. Additionally, we demand that AU establish scholarships for Palestinian university students who are unable to complete their education in Gaza due to the destruction. Similar programs have been established at several European universities, directly contributing to the continued survival of Palestinian knowledge production and academic tradition.<sup>12</sup> We demand that Aarhus University lives up to the responsibility that comes with being part of the Scholars at Risk (SAR) network, through which AU and other Danish universities offered fellowships and temporary employment to Ukrainian researchers affected by the war in Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> At SAR's global congress, held in June 2024, a panel of Palestinian academics discussed the crisis facing Gaza's academia<sup>14</sup>. It is therefore not news to AU or SAR that Palestinian academics are in urgent need of support and protection.

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<sup>10</sup>pp.10,<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2024-gaza-who-will-pay-to-rebuild/>.

<sup>12</sup> [HESPAL stipendium](#), offered by the *British Council*; Goldsmiths University of London, [Palestinian Scholarship](#); University of St. Andrews (Skotland), [STEPS program](#); Ireland-Palestine [Scholarship Program](#); L-Università ta' Malta and the government of Malta, [Scholarships for Palestinian Nationals](#); The University of Siena, [The Scholarship for Palestinian Students](#); Many Dutch universities offer scholarships and fellowships to Palestinian students, [a database can be found here](#).

<sup>13</sup> <https://medarbejdere.au.dk/konsekvenser-af-krigen-i-ukraine>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/SAR-2024-Congress-Report-For-Website.pdf>, p. 9.

## 1.5. Open Dialogue

We demand:

- That AU engages in a constructive dialogue with its students and staff regarding the presented demands.

The past year's demonstrations and encampments around the world have shown increasing frustration from students and university staff regarding the inadequate and problematic ways international universities have handled what is now being investigated by the ICJ as Israel's possible genocide against the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, these reactions reflect a lack of dialogue between universities and their students.

The same applies to AU, where repeated calls for dialogue have not been met by the university administration, and where it has taken almost a year since our original petition to schedule a meeting with AU leadership. We are fully aware that an academic boycott is a complex process that must be undertaken with appropriate caution. Therefore, we demand that AU engages in an open and honest dialogue with its students and staff regarding the implementation of this. This would not only signal that the university takes these demands seriously but also that it wants to act against potential war crimes and safeguard international law and justice.

## 1.6. Public Statement

We demand:

- That AU issues a public statement recognizing the Palestinian civilian population.
- That AU actively calls for a ceasefire and the observance of international law, including human rights.

Since December 2023, when students handed over signatures collected among AU staff and students in solidarity with the Palestinian civilian population, we have been demanding that AU makes a public statement addressing the situation in Palestine. We are aware of the statement

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/192>.



made in November 2023, but we strongly criticize the fact that none of the university's public statements contain words such as "Palestine," "Palestinian territories," "Gaza," or "Palestinians." The absence of these terms constitutes a further denial of the Palestinian people's right to life, self-determination, and freedom.

AU has repeatedly stated that it follows the foreign policy lines of the sitting government. However, we want to point out that the current government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, and the University of Copenhagen all use terms like "Palestine," "Palestinian territories," "Gaza," or "Palestinians" in their statements on the subject.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, we must conclude that the exclusion of these words is not due to government policy but a choice made specifically by AU. Moreover, the government has called for a ceasefire. A similar statement from AU would thus align with the current Danish foreign policy.<sup>17</sup>

We demand that AU makes a public statement where they emphasize, through the use of terms like "Palestine," "Palestinian territories," "Gaza," and "Palestinian civilians," that they recognize whom we are talking about. This would not only make it easier for AU, its students, and staff to engage in a dialogue, as we would be sure that we are all discussing the same matter, but it would also be an acknowledgment of the nearly 40,000 Palestinians who have been killed by Israel since October 2023.

Israel's bombings have not only killed countless civilians but also destroyed cultural landmarks, historic buildings protected under UNESCO, public libraries, and Palestinian cultural heritage. This constitutes a direct attack on the Palestinian identity and should be alarming to everyone, but especially to the university, as Israel is deliberately destroying world heritage, history, and culture—elements that AU, in various ways, deals with through the study of such subjects. Calling for a ceasefire is not only an acknowledgment that AU respects and protects international law and human rights but also a step towards protecting a culture and history—not to mention AU's colleagues in the form of various academics, professors, researchers, teachers, and students.

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<sup>16</sup> Various examples can be found including the following from [University of Copenhagen](#) and various from the Danish government including [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#).

<sup>17</sup>

<https://politiken.dk/internationalt/art9806069/Mette-Frederiksen-sk%C3%A6rper-retorikken-og-opfordrer-%C2%B1kraftigt%C2%AB-til-v%C3%A5benhvile-i-Gaza>.

## 2. Presentation of Academic Boycott

For decades, Israeli universities have played a central role in planning, implementing, and justifying Israel's occupation and apartheid policies.<sup>18</sup> Israeli universities also maintain a uniquely close relationship and collaboration with the country's military. Israeli universities are not only deeply complicit in the development of weapons systems and military doctrines used in Israel's war crimes in Gaza;<sup>19</sup> they also provide legal and moral justification for the ongoing colonization of Palestinian land, extrajudicial executions, and arbitrary attacks on civilians.<sup>20</sup>

Some Israeli universities, such as Ariel and Hebrew University in Jerusalem (HUJI), are entirely or partially built as settlements on occupied Palestinian land, in direct violation of international law.<sup>21</sup> It is on this basis that we will henceforth refer to universities and institutions that participate in such activities as "complicit universities and institutions." Since the beginning of what is currently being investigated as genocide, universities across Israel have not only expressed unconditional support for the Israeli military but have also provided financial compensation and other benefits to so-called "*warrior students*" serving in the Israeli military.

Academics across all Danish universities are demanding the implementation of an academic boycott of Israeli universities and institutions, and that Danish universities take appropriate measures to investigate and evaluate these institutions.<sup>22</sup> The call for an academic boycott is just one pillar of the global *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS)* movement.<sup>23</sup> The BDS movement was launched in 2005 by 170 Palestinian civil society organizations, including "*The General Union of Palestinian Teachers and The Federation of Unions of Palestinian Universities' Professors and Employees*". Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, the Palestinian BDS movement calls for non-violent pressure on Israel until the country complies with international law by ending the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, recognizing the rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel, and respecting the right of return for displaced

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<sup>18</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/files/2011/02/EOO23-24-Web.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup>

<https://bdsmovement.net/news/academia-weapons-and-occupation-how-tel-aviv-university-serves-interests-israeli-military-and>.

<sup>20</sup> <https://electronicintifada.net/content/aut-boycott-freedom-vs-academic-freedom/5609>

<sup>21</sup>

<https://www.haaretz.com/2011-01-09/ty-article/israel-prize-laureates-join-academic-boycott-of-settlement-university/0000017f-ed56-d4a6-af7f-ffd614260000>

<sup>22</sup> <https://academicsforpalestine.dk/sign/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/>

Palestinians. In South Africa, an academic boycott was also a central part of the movement, but while the South African academic boycott targeted both institutions and individuals, the current campaign against Israeli universities is aimed solely at institutions.

The academic boycott is a boycott of Israeli institutions, *not* individuals. Therefore, the academic boycott does not conflict with the principles of academic freedom. In accordance with the global BDS movement, we oppose all forms of discrimination, including Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and discrimination based on an individual's nationality. The BDS movement does not support the boycott of individual Israeli academics simply because of their affiliation with complicit Israeli institutions. The academic boycott, as outlined by BDS, does not prevent Israeli researchers from collaborating with international researchers and institutions. Only if an exchange is part of an institutional collaboration with a complicit Israeli institution, or if a person represents the state of Israel or complicit Israeli institutions (such as a dean, rector, or president), or if the person is appointed/recruited to participate in Israel's efforts to "re-brand" itself, are their activities subject to the institutional boycott that the BDS movement advocates.

Israeli researchers have played an indispensable role in uncovering and exposing Israel's systematic colonization and apartheid, either through their academic work or public advocacy. However, Israeli universities, as institutions, do not offer much space for criticism. On the contrary, censorship and the restriction of academic freedom at Israeli universities are well documented by both Palestinian and Israeli scholars. Discussions on topics such as the Nakba in 1948, the right of Palestinian refugees to return, Zionism, the complicity of Israeli academic institutions in settler-colonial and apartheid projects, etc., are often forbidden on campus, and critical researchers are regularly subjected to harassment, threats, and even suspension. As a result, several of the most prominent critical Israeli researchers have left Israel. Over the last nine months alone, *Scholars at Risk* has documented the dismissal and suspension of at least three researchers for criticizing the Israeli military's brutal attacks on civilians in Gaza. At the same time, the Knesset is currently debating a bill that would force universities to fire staff on vague grounds. It goes without saying that Palestinian students are not only regularly but disproportionately subjected to disciplinary measures by university administrations and also experience threats and harassment from fellow students. In other words, the idea that Israeli universities are bastions of liberal thought and academic freedom is a myth.

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### 3. Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI)

This section is primarily written based on the following sources: reports from B'Tselem, Academia for Justice, and a statement signed by a number of international lawyers and academics in law. The purpose is to emphasize why PSA believes that HUJI is a particularly problematic partner university, due to its campus on Mount Scopus, which is located on illegally occupied land in the area of the same name.

The Palestinian area Issawiya (or al-‘Esawiyah) was subjected to land expropriation as early as 1968, including to enable the expansion of Hebrew University’s existing campus.<sup>24</sup> Specifically, the dormitory associated with the university, the Student Village, is located in the area called 'French Hill,' which is within illegally annexed land.

#### Statistics on Land Expropriaion in East Jerusalem

East Jerusalem		01 January 2011			
Neighborhood	Date of expropriation	Amount of land taken (in dunams)	Size of neighborhood (in dunams)	Number of housing units 2002	Number of residents 2002
French Hill and Mt. Scopus	Jan. 8 1968	3,345	2,019	2,108	7,867
Ramot Eshkol and Givat Hamivtar	Jan. 8 1968		588	1,153	2,948

*Screenshot taken from: B'Tselem. "Statistics on Land Expropriation in East Jerusalem" statistics, btselem.org. 1 Jan 2011. Accessed 11 Sep 2024. [Link to B'Tselem statistics page.](#)*

The remainder of the Mount Scopus campus is located in a demilitarized zone on Mount Scopus, marked in red in the image below. The areas marked with black stripes are those on illegally occupied land and, therefore, function as settlements, according to Concerned International Lawyers:

<sup>24</sup> Hareuveni, Eyal. "This is Jerusalem: Violence and Dispossession in al-‘Esawiyah" report, *B'Tselem*, Maj 2020, pp. 7.



taken from: *Concerned International Lawyers*. “Statement by Legal Scholars and International Lawyers Against Holding ESIL Forum at the Hebrew University in East Jerusalem”, *Critical Legal Thinking*, 23 Nov. 2017.  
NOTE: Image edited to better highlight the existing recorded lines.

The above image comes from a specific example of criticism directed at Hebrew University as an institution (both its physical premises and decisions made by the university) in a 2017 statement from a group of international legal scholars. The statement was written in response to an event where “*The European Society of International Law*” (ESIL) was scheduled to hold a forum at Hebrew University the following year. The statement stressed that this could be seen as legitimizing the illegal occupation and the associated human rights violations that come with it.<sup>25</sup> The demilitarized zone where the university’s building originally was located is also acknowledged in the statement, but as it highlights, the university has undergone physical and geographical expansions since 1967, which also include privately-owned Palestinian land, and can therefore be considered illegal settlements. In summary, this means that HUJI is, at least partially, located on and benefits from illegally occupied land. The statement and its signatories also point out that, in addition to being problematic due to its location on occupied land, HUJI greatly benefits (in terms of accessibility, transportation options, etc.) from the infrastructure resulting from the surrounding settlements.

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<sup>25</sup> *Concerned International Lawyers*. “Statement by Legal Scholars and International Lawyers Against Holding ESIL Forum at the Hebrew University in East Jerusalem”, *Critical Legal Thinking*, 23. November 2017.

In more recent times, according to B'Tselem's 2020 report, the residents of Issawiya have been both surrounded and affected by the expansion of Israeli institutions. B'Tselem states that Israel has annexed more than 90% of Issawiya's land through various means, a process that began with Israel's occupation of the area in 1967.<sup>26</sup> As this development continues, the mobility and right to self-determination of Palestinian residents have been increasingly restricted.

*"Expropriation, declaration of 'state land,' and military seizure have denied the Palestinian residents any possibility of benefiting from the land—a key reason for their poverty."*<sup>27</sup>

The report also points out that the residents' situation is further exacerbated by severe housing shortages combined with Israel's imposition of strict restrictions on construction and the expansion of existing homes and necessary urban development. All of this, while Israeli urban planning around the area expands and isolates the residents of Issawiya more and more, limiting their freedom of movement, mobility, and access to resources.

The settlements and expansions on illegally occupied land are, as the Concerned International Lawyers also point out, one of the fundamental problems that need to be addressed:

*"...a significant part of HUJI is on occupied territory; that, in effect, HUJI is part of the settlements project; and that holding the event at HUJI is effectively an endorsement of the occupation and the associated human rights violations. None of the assurances provided can remedy these problems."*<sup>28</sup>

The issue of the silent acceptance and holding of such events on campus is also emphasized in HUJI's own argument and defense against the academic boycott of the institution, including the following statement:

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<sup>26</sup> Hareuveni, Eyal, 2020, p. 7

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Concerned International Lawyers, 2017, under "Assurances given by the Organisers to ESIL's Board"

*“Furthermore, the international community has always recognized the Mt. Scopus campus as part of Israel and not as part of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. International dignitaries and diplomats, including the EU ambassador, and members of international organizations, **regularly visit the campus, participate in its activities, and co-sponsor events held in it.**”<sup>2930</sup>*

However, if you refer to the earlier image “Image A” (p. 11), it is clear that large parts of the land on which HUJI is built were expropriated in 1968, and it is therefore incorrect for HUJI to claim that the territory does not include land taken in the aftermath of the 1967 war.

For us in PSA, this raises a concern about AU’s continued collaboration with Hebrew University, based on the critique from Concerned International Lawyers and the assumption that parts of the campus are settlements, which thus violate international law. In addition to this, HUJI has further close connections to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) through programs like 'Talpiot,' 'Tzameret,' and 'Havatzalot' (see section 6).

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### **3.1. HUJI and Issawiya in Recent Times**

The organization 'Academia for Equality' sent an open letter in 2020 to the administration of HUJI, expressing concern about the university’s apparent involvement in the repression of the residents of Issawiya.<sup>31</sup>

The letter mentions repeated temporary blockades of the southern entrance to Issawiya, which borders the Mount Scopus campus and the Hadassah hospital. These blockades have had significant negative consequences for the residents of the area, and a blockade in the fall of 2019 was reportedly imposed at the request of Hebrew University. Additionally, the authors of the letter point to another incident in December 2019, when uniformed Israeli police conducted surveillance and filmed the Issawiya area from one of the university’s faculty buildings.

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<sup>29</sup> HUJI Initiative Against Academic Boycott. “The Location of Hebrew University Campus in Mt. Scopus” . [https://international.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/internationalnew/files/mt\\_scopus\\_lands\\_-\\_english.pdf](https://international.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/internationalnew/files/mt_scopus_lands_-_english.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> PDF found via [https://international.huji.ac.il/https%3A//international.huji.ac.il/Media\\_Kit](https://international.huji.ac.il/https%3A//international.huji.ac.il/Media_Kit) under the paragraph “Useful Information” 23. jun 2024

<sup>31</sup> Academia for Equality. “An open Letter to the administration of the Hebrew University and the academic community with regard to the University’s involvement in police harassment of the Issawiyah neighborhood” i [academy4equality.com](http://academy4equality.com), 19. Jan 2020.

Following this, the Academia for Equality team urged Hebrew University to refrain from giving the police access to use the campus for any purposes other than emergencies, as such practices could be perceived as authorized harassment of the Palestinian population conducted on the university's campus.

Apart from the fact that parts of the university's facilities are considered to be located on illegally occupied land, it is also concerning that reports like those from 2019 suggest that HUJI might be involved in harassing and restricting the mobility of Palestinian residents.

In connection with the above, it is worth mentioning the ICJ's (International Court of Justice) 2024 Advisory Opinion, which states:

*“Observing that, in the present case, the public property confiscated or requisitioned for the development of Israeli settlements benefits the civilian population of settlers, to the detriment of the local Palestinian population, the Court concludes that Israel’s land policies are not in conformity with Articles 46, 52, and 55 of the Hague Regulations.”*<sup>32</sup>

The ICJ further categorically states:

*“The sustained abuse by Israel of its position as an occupying power, through annexation and an assertion of permanent control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory and continued frustration of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, **violates fundamental principles of international law and renders Israel’s presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory unlawful** [...] Consequently, Israel has an obligation to bring an **end to its presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible.**”*<sup>33</sup>

Following the ICJ's advisory opinion, PSA finds it natural that AU takes this opinion into account in its future evaluation processes and in reassessing existing collaboration agreements with Israeli institutions.

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<sup>32</sup> International Court of Justice. “Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem”, summary of advisory opinion, 19. July 2024, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 16-17.



### 3.2. HUJI Study Abroad through AU

Through AU's *MoveOn* database for exchange opportunities, it is possible to apply for exchanges at HUJI—specifically through the faculties of law and social sciences.<sup>34</sup> Travel reports from students who have participated in these exchange programs indicate that students who sought housing through HUJI were accommodated in the Student Village, located outside the demilitarized zone on Mount Scopus (the areas marked with black stripes in "Image B")—in other words, in an area that was settled after the 1967 war. As these accommodations also house Israeli citizens, they are recognized as settlements. Similar patterns are seen in travel reports from MA students who studied at the Political Science faculty.

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## 4. Terma

Terma produces components for the F-35 fighter jets that have been used by Israel to bomb Gaza both in 2021 and during the country's current attacks. The company manufactures, among other things, the pylons used to carry and fire bombs and missiles.<sup>35</sup> The F-35 jets have been used to drop massive bombs in Gaza—bombs that the UN has warned against because they can "tear limbs off people hundreds of feet from the explosion site."<sup>36</sup> In an attack that took place in Gaza as recently as July this year, it was confirmed that these jets were used to bomb an area near a refugee camp, where 90 Palestinians were killed and at least 300 were injured.<sup>37</sup>

According to *DanWatch* and *Information*, which have run an extensive article series on Terma, these F-35 jets have played a "central role" in Israel's bombings.<sup>38</sup> Terma itself has

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<sup>34</sup> <https://au.adv-pub.moveon4.de/report-page-1593/>

<sup>35</sup> Charlotte Aagaard, Emilie Ekeberg og Nikolaj Houmann Mortensen, "Danmark på kant med international ret: Dansk militært udstyr bruges i Gaza-bombardementer," *Danwatch*, 1. nov. 2023.

<https://danwatch.dk/danmark-paa-kant-med-international-ret-dansk-militaert-udstyr-bruges-i-gaza-bombardementer/>

<sup>36</sup> Charlotte Aagaard og Emilie Ekeberg, "Tonstunge bomber og massiv skade: Sådan bruger Israel danskudrustede kampfly i Gaza," *Danwatch*, 26. mar. 2024.

<https://danwatch.dk/danskudstyrede-kampfly-spiller-en-noeglerolle-i-bombardementerne-af-gaza/>

<sup>37</sup> Charlotte Aagaard og Emilie Ekeberg, "Store civile tab: Danskudstyrede kampfly stod bag blodigt angreb i Gaza," *Danwatch*, 1. sep. 2024,

<https://danwatch.dk/store-civile-tab-dansk-udstyrede-kampfly-stod-bag-blodigt-angreb-i-gaza/>

<sup>38</sup> Aagaard og Ekeberg, "Tonstunge bomber."

acknowledged that Israel may end up as the end-user of the components exported by the company.<sup>39</sup> Several human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Mellempfolkeligt Samvirke, have therefore initiated a lawsuit against the Danish state for being complicit in war crimes through arms exports to Israel in violation of international obligations. Thus, AU collaborates with a company that is currently the focal point of a lawsuit concerning war crimes.<sup>40</sup>

AU's collaboration with Terma includes facilitating internships for students, including inviting the company to the university's career days. Additionally, AU collaborates with the company in areas such as research and project courses. In these project courses, engineering students enter into collaboration agreements with the company. As of January this year, these collaborations were still ongoing.<sup>41</sup> AU's rector has confirmed the collaboration and rejected the idea of ending it, arguing that it takes place on a legal basis.<sup>42</sup>

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## 5. Precedents at AU for Suspending International Collaboration

AU and other Danish universities have repeatedly insisted that they are unable to meet students' demands for an academic boycott of Israel, stating that they do not conduct independent foreign policy.<sup>43</sup> However, the university has previously demonstrated that it has the capacity to act independently, i.e., without directives from the government, when it comes to decisions about foreign policy and research collaboration.

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<sup>39</sup> Charlotte Aagaard og Ekeberg, Emilie, "Våbeneksport: Myndighederne udelod oplysning om Israel", *Danwatch*, 26. jun. 2024, <https://danwatch.dk/vaabeneksport-myndighederne-udelod-oplysning-om-israel/>.

<sup>40</sup> Amnesty. "NGO'er sagsøger den danske stat for at stoppe våbeneksport til Israel," *Amnesty.dk*, 12. mar. 2024. <https://amnesty.dk/ngoer-sagsoger-den-danske-stat-for-at-stoppe-vabeneksport-til-israel/>.

<sup>41</sup> Lucas W. Carn, "Aarhus Universitet fortsætter samarbejdet med Terma: "Det er under al kritik"," *Arbejderen*, 26. jun. 2024, <https://arbejderen.dk/indland/aarhus-universitet-fortsætter-samarbejdet-med-terma-det-er-under-al-kritik/>.

<sup>42</sup> Jette Aagaard og Sebastian Gjerding, "Aarhus Universitet afviser studerendes krav om at afbryde samarbejde med våbenvirksomhed," *Information*, 21. nov. 2023, <https://www.information.dk/indland/2023/11/aarhus-universitet-afviser-studerendes-krav-afbryde-samarbejde-vaabenvirksomhed>.

<sup>43</sup> <https://dkuni.dk/pressemeddelelser/ytringsfrihed-og-demonstrationer-paa-de-danske-universiteter/>.

A decision made in March 2023 serves as an example of this. Here, AU changed its previous policy regarding the admission of Chinese students supported by the state-funded Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC).<sup>44</sup> The decision was based on allegations made by the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* and indicates AU's administration's ability to make independent decisions.

The ban on research collaboration with the Chinese company BGI is another example of a decision where the university has demonstrated its ability to change its policy for ethical reasons and implement an academic boycott. Although this decision was made in dialogue with intelligence services and the Ministry of Education, Brian Vinter, chair of AU's URIS group, explains that it was ultimately AU's own decision: "Both the Ministry and the Security and Intelligence Service support our decision."<sup>45</sup>

The URIS group is a committee established by AU's administration to implement the guidelines from URIS (see section 6).<sup>46</sup> According to AU, the primary purpose of implementing the guidelines is to protect the university from espionage. However, the above example also shows that the committee and its chair discuss ethical considerations when it comes to reviewing AU's international collaborators. The same standards should therefore apply when it comes to collaborating with Israel, which in some ways violates elements of the URIS guidelines, as elaborated in the next section.

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<https://omnibus.au.dk/en/archive/show/artikel/au-stopper-optaget-af-kinesiske-phd-studerende-der-har-underskrevet-troskabsed.>

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<https://omnibus.au.dk/en/archive/show/artikel/topforsker-inden-for-genomforskning-siger-op-paa-au-efter-universitetets-beslutning-om-at-stoppe-kinesiske-samarbejder-1.>

<sup>46</sup> [https://medarbejdere.au.dk/administration/forskningspraksis/uris/.](https://medarbejdere.au.dk/administration/forskningspraksis/uris/)

# 6. Guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Research for International Research and Innovation Collaborations

## 6.1. Transparency According to Guidelines

In the preface to the guidelines from the Committee for Guidelines for International Research and Innovation Collaborations (URIS), the committee states that collaborations with international research institutions should be based on reciprocity and transparency.<sup>47</sup> As mentioned in the above chapters on collaborations with companies and institutions like Terma and Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI), PSA raises the question of whether Aarhus University (AU) is meeting the ethical standards and has taken the necessary steps to properly reassess the ethical considerations in collaborating with these institutions. Therefore, we, the students, demand that AU lives up to the above requirement for transparency and influence in the considerations about all institutions if necessary.

## 6.2. Guidelines on Hostile Powers

The guidelines indicate how universities should exercise particular caution in collaboration when this could contribute to the risk of violating UN human rights conventions and how universities can avoid contributing to the strengthening of capacities in a militant state. The guidelines point out specific points that should be noted, especially in relation to the problems with institutions mentioned in the chapters above, such as:

*"Institutions should establish procedures for doing complete background checks on international partners, where relevant, and share with each other information about potentially problematic partners."<sup>48</sup>*

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<sup>47</sup> The Ministry of Higher Education and Science. "Guidelines for international research and innovation cooperation," at *ufm.dk*, May 2022, [https://ufm.dk/publikationer/2022/filer/uris-guidelines\\_english-version.pdf](https://ufm.dk/publikationer/2022/filer/uris-guidelines_english-version.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> The Ministry of Higher Education and Science. "Guidelines," p. 1.

*"Institutions should carefully consider whether the likelihood of added value is greatest with a particular partner under consideration, and whether the cooperation envisaged is based on compatible interests and ensures equality."<sup>49</sup>*

Furthermore, the guidelines state that:

*"Institutions should establish procedures for doing complete background checks on international partners, where relevant, and share with each other information about potentially problematic partners".<sup>50</sup>*

And that:

*"International cooperation calls for special caution if the partner's home country is characterized as 'not like-minded', which in this context means a country that violates internationally recognized norms and principles, such as the UN human rights charter, the rule of law, academic freedom and the independence of the individual/institution from the state.<sup>51</sup> [...] The committee notes that, although the aforementioned norms are not upheld in certain countries, research institutions can still take measures to ensure that core values are respected in the institutions' international partnerships. **The committee assesses that it is an aggravating factor when civilian research is not separated from military research (civil-military fusion) in non-like-minded countries.**"<sup>52</sup>*

In the previous chapters, we saw how AU continues to collaborate with companies and institutions like Terma and HUJI. In light of the above guidelines, we can clearly state that AU does not adhere to these guidelines.

### **6.3. The Havatzalot Program and HUJI**

HUJI's facilities are not only built on occupied land (as indicated in the previous chapter). After a brief review of HUJI's activities, we have found that the university also offers direct training to IDF military personnel. Through the so-called Havatzalot program, IDF soldiers receive

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<sup>49</sup> The Ministry of Higher Education and Science. "Guidelines," p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> The Ministry of Higher Education and Science. "Guidelines," p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> The Ministry of Higher Education and Science. "Guidelines," p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> The Ministry of Higher Education and Science. "Guidelines," p. 19.

education in social sciences, as well as Islamic and Middle Eastern studies.<sup>53</sup> This makes HUJI a direct participant in the education of military personnel, and thus directly contributes to the military research and power of the state of Israel. This should not only raise serious concerns about HUJI's ability to operate independently of the military interests of the Israeli state but also how HUJI is complicit in aiding third parties who, according to the International Court of Justice, have violated the Geneva Conventions on numerous occasions.<sup>54</sup> Given these concerns, the leadership at AU can in no way be said to have fully considered and scrutinized possible collaborators in accordance with the guidelines before entering into these collaborations.

#### **6.4. Political Research and Education at HUJI**

Particularly in the case of HUJI, where graduate students in both law and political science can follow research programs and lectures, PSA demands that all ties be immediately severed and that AU provides an explanation of how the university ensures that research conducted by AU's students and researchers is not unknowingly and unwittingly used by the Israeli state to promote its military and illegal actions against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Fields of study that AU's students can participate in include comparative territorial politics and conflict management - topics of the same nature as those in which IDF military students participate, as mentioned earlier, in the social sciences field.

In conclusion, it is deeply concerning that AU collaborates with a university that is directly linked to the IDF, which has a long history of committing numerous war crimes and is the primary actor for the Israeli state in carrying out genocide against the Palestinian people and the occupation of their land. PSA cannot stress enough the importance and necessity of immediately cutting all ties with HUJI.

Equally important is the boycott and reevaluation of academic and professional partnerships related to Israel, including but not limited to exchange programs, corporate and research collaborations, and research pools. This is already mandated by The Ministry of Higher Education and Science's guidelines.

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<sup>53</sup> Havatzalot, <https://www.havatzalot.org/>.

<sup>54</sup> International Court of Justice. "Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", summary of advisory opinion, 19. July 2024, p. 11. <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-sum-01-00-en.pdf>.

## 7. The Lack of Academic Freedom in Israel

Palestinians and pro-Palestinian voices within the academic field in Israel are experiencing fundamental restrictions on their rights concerning academic freedom. Restrictions on the right to speak critically about the Israeli state and in solidarity with the Palestinian cause have intensified in recent years. In July 2024, the Israeli parliament passed the first reading of a bill allowing Israel to fire professors if they express something that, according to the state, can be considered 'support for terrorism.'<sup>55</sup> A previous draft of the bill also classified any denial that Israel is a Jewish and democratic state as legitimate grounds for dismissal. This bill follows the increasing pressure on critical academics in Israeli universities, which has already led to numerous suspensions and dismissals.

The criteria for something to be classified as support for terrorism are vague, and the bill aims to escalate the existing attacks on pro-Palestinian academia. As previously mentioned, since October 2023, Scholars At Risk has documented at least three cases where professors have been fired or suspended after speaking critically about Israel's attacks on Gaza.<sup>56</sup> This includes a professor who was condemned by their university and placed on unpaid leave after signing an open letter that described Israel's attacks as genocide, as well as a professor from Hebrew University. After suspending the professor, the university issued a press release emphasizing that they are a "proud Zionist institution."<sup>57</sup>

Additionally, students across Israeli universities have also been suspended due to their activity on social media. In half of these cases, students were suspended before any disciplinary proceedings had even begun.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, a bill passed in 2011 allows the Israeli state to withhold funding from institutions that commemorate Nakba (the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948). This

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<sup>55</sup> Middle East Monitor, "'Draconian' bill to suppress free speech in Israel higher education gains approval," *Middle East Monitor*, 11 Jul. 2024, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240711-draconian-bill-to-suppress-free-speech-in-israel-higher-education-gains-approval/>.

<sup>56</sup> Scholars at risk, [https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/academic-freedom-monitoring-project-index/?\\_snk\\_keyword=&taxes%5Bregions%5D%5Bisrael%5D=on&\\_snk\\_dt%5Bshowall%5D=y](https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/academic-freedom-monitoring-project-index/?_snk_keyword=&taxes%5Bregions%5D%5Bisrael%5D=on&_snk_dt%5Bshowall%5D=y).

<sup>57</sup> Gavriel Fiske, "Hebrew University suspends senior lecturer who called for abolishing Zionism," *The Times of Israel*, 12 Mar. 2024, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hebrew-university-suspends-senior-lecturer-who-called-for-abolishing-zionism/>.

<sup>58</sup> Mariam Farah, "Israeli academia joins the crackdown on dissent," *+972 Magazine*, 3 Dec. 2023, <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-academia-crackdown-palestinian-students/>.

law has forced Palestinian student associations to hold memorials off-campus and cover their own security expenses.<sup>59</sup> Continued collaboration with Israeli universities thus contributes to legitimizing this ongoing suppression of academic freedom among Palestinian and pro-Palestinian voices.

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<sup>59</sup> Noam Sheizaf. "Nakba Law in action: Students must pay expenses for ceremony," *+972 Magazine*, 13. May 2012, <https://www.972mag.com/nakba-law-in-action-students-forced-to-pay-expenses-of-commemoration-ceremony/>.



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