Corporate Watch

# GAZA: LIFE BENEATH THE DRONES



# GAZA: LIFE BENEATH THE DRONES

## by Therezia Cooper and Tom Anderson
## February 2015

Unpiloted aircraft, known as drones, have become Israel's weapon of choice in its attacks on Gaza. In 2012 drones killed more people in Gaza than any other aircraft. In Israel's 'Operation Protective Edge' attack in 2014, 37% of those killed died in drone attacks.[1]

In 2013 Corporate Watch visited Gaza for two months to interview the survivors of drone attacks and human rights workers about the effect of living beneath the drones. They were published in serial format in 2014.

The interviews tell the story of the survivors and highlight their calls for support from the global solidarity movement.

This briefing compiles the interviews and gives short profiles of some of the companies profiting from Israel's drone wars.

We hope that reading this briefing will inspire you to take action in solidarity with people living under siege in Gaza. As one survivor of a drone strike told us: "We do not need just words".

Corporate Watch
www.corporatewatch.org

Corporate Watch is an independent, not-for-profit research and publishing group that investigates the social and environmental impacts of corporate power. Since 1996 Corporate Watch has been publishing corporate critical 'information for action' in the form of books, reports, investigative articles, briefings and magazines.

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**Cover photos**

Front cover: Photo taken in August 2014 by Charlie Andreasson of the International Solidarity Movement in Shujaiya after Israel's 'Operation Protective Edge' attack. According to Charlie, the whole area was destroyed beyond recognition. Bullet casings and fragments of grenades, missiles and bombs could be found everywhere.

Back cover: During the 2014 attacks on Gaza, activists occupied the roof of Elbit's subsidiary, UAV Engines, in Shenstone, Staffordshire, UK. They succeeded in closing the factory for 48 hours.

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**Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the many people who were kind to us and supported us while we were in Gaza doing the initial research for this briefing. In particular, we would like to thank the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights and our translators, Maher Azzam and Khaled Shehab. We would also like to thank Dr Haidar Eid and Dr Mona El Farra for their advice.

The article about Barclays bank was first published on Electronic Intifada on 21 November 2014 and written by By Tom Anderson and Michael Deas. Michael Deas is the coordinator in Europe of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC), the broad coalition of Palestinian organisations that works to support the movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel.

# MONITORING THE DRONES

In the Gaza Strip there is no escape from Israel's drones. Nicknamed 'zenana' by Palestinians because of their noisy buzzing, the drones (remote control aircraft) are omnipresent. Sometimes they are there to carry out an extra judicial killing and sometimes they are there for surveillance. If you are on the ground you do not know which and you have no choice but to try to ignore them.

Since Israel's partial withdrawal in 2005, there is not a permanent presence of Israeli soldiers in the majority of the Gaza Strip (although soldiers are a presence in the 'buffer zone', off Gaza's coasts and during frequent invasions), but there is no doubt that the occupation is still brutally enforced - only now a lot of of it is done remotely from the skies.

During our visit to Gaza, Corporate Watch talked to the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights about the changing impact of drones on the people of Gaza.

Al Mezan is a monitoring organisation working for the protection of human rights in the Gaza Strip. As such, they keep extensive records detailing all violations, with separate databases for external and internal abuses. Their files record the number of deaths, injuries and properties destroyed, as well as anything that can increase the understanding of each attack, including the type of weapon used. Their initial information is collected by fieldworkers who go to the scene of an attack, assess the evidence and talk to eyewitnesses and people affected. Established in the late nineties, Al Mezan has been recording drone strikes for as long as they have happened in the Strip. This is not always a straightforward task.

According to the UK research group Drone Wars UK, the Israeli military has never, despite the mounting evidence to the contrary, admitted publicly that it is using armed drones in Gaza.[2]

According to Yamin Al Madhoun, one of Al Mezan's fieldworkers, people were confused when evidence of drone strikes first started to be noticed around the year 2000. It was a new kind of warfare which changed everything: "When they started to use the drones we did not know what drones were", Yamin said. "We did not understand. Explosions just seemed to come out of nowhere. It took us about a year to start learning about drones".

A selection of the weaponry fired on Gaza over the years collected by Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights. Photo taken by Corporate Watch - November 2013.



At scenes of drone strikes fieldworkers used to find a golden cable, something that seemed to be attached to the missile, but this has now changed, with the main signifier of drone use being the type of destruction caused and the kind of target being hit. Drones are most commonly used for 'targeted assassinations', or extra judicial killings, of individuals and for a practice referred to as 'roof knocking'. Roof knockings are used when the Israeli military wants to totally destroy a house but starts with a drone attack targeting the roof as a warning for the people inside to leave.[3] These attacks are usually followed by F16 strikes on the same or nearby buildings about three minutes later. If the people fleeing are lucky, this warning is enough to save their lives. But often it is not.

Although there are different kind of missiles fitted on drones, the strikes usually leave a hole of about 10cm on the target and cause partial destruction to buildings, making it possible to distinguish between strikes by drones, F16 jets and Apache helicopters.

In Al Mazan's experience, Israel's increased reliance on drones does not mean less casualties in Gaza. "When Israeli forces started to use the drones the number of people killed increased", Yamin said. "This is a cheaper weapon for Israel to use so drones give the Israelis an opportunity to attack more and more. The people who manufacture the drones facilitate more attacks by the Israelis because they are cheaper and the drones are in the sky all the time. They don't even have to plan the attack properly beforehand".

For people on the ground it is almost impossible to foresee a drone attack, although the buzzing sound of the drones is recognised by everyone, and some people report that the noise of the drone gets louder before a strike.

"What can we do?" Yamin said. "When we hear an Apache or an F16 we know that it will only be there for a while and we can go into our houses for safety. Drones are in the air 24 hours a day so the people don't hide from them. We can't hide 24 hours a day". On rare occasions the survivors have reported being able to see the drone before it fired, but often a missile strike is the first warning.

Photo taken on the 18th August 2014 by Charlie Andreasson of the International Solidarity Movement of the destruction in Gaza City after Israel's 'Operation Protective Edge' attack. The damaged minaret is all that remains of a mosque.



# MONITORING THE DRONES

## Increased attacks

Because of the secrecy about Israel's drone use in the Gaza Strip, it is hard to get officially confirmed figures of the exact number of casualties caused by drone attacks, but everyone monitoring the situation has no doubt that the proportion of Israeli attacks which are carried out by drones is increasing. According to Mohammed Mattar, data entry analyst at Al Mezan, the first time the organisation was able to be sure that deaths were caused by an armed drone attack was in 2004, when two people were killed. In 2009, the number of people killed by drones was 461, nearly half of the total number of people killed that year. In 2012, the year of the Israeli invasion known as 'Pillar of Cloud', 201 out of a total of 255 people were killed via remote control by drones. These statistics do not include people killed by other weaponry in attacks aided by drone surveillance or people injured in drone attacks.

The number of deaths (as a proportion of total deaths) caused by drone strikes has been increasing. Al Mezan provided Corporate Watch with these shocking figures for the years 2000-2014:

| Year | Total recorded number of people killed by Israeli attacks in Gaza | Number of people killed by Israeli drones in Gaza (% of total) |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 123 | 0 (0%) |
| 2001 | 243 | 0 (0%) |
| 2002 | 472 | 0 (0%) |
| 2003 | 398 | 0 (0%) |
| 2004 | 646 | 2 (0.3%) |
| 2005 | 99 | 0 (0%) |
| 2006 | 534 | 91 (17%) |
| 2007 | 281 | 98 (34.9%) |
| 2008 | 769 | 172 (22.4%) |
| 2009 | 1058 | 461 (43.6%) |
| 2010 | 72 | 19 (26.4%) |
| 2011 | 112 | 58 (51.8%) |
| 2012 | 255 | 201 (78.8%) |
| 2013 | 11 | 1 (9.09%) |
| 2014 | 2230 | 840 (37.7%) |

What quickly becomes clear when you talk to people in Gaza is that the alarming numbers of deaths do not tell the full story. The psychological impact of these weapons is everywhere. In Al Qarara, outside Khan Younis, we talked to a family who go inside their house every time they hear a drone in the sky after their daughter was arbitrarily killed in a drone strike in 2009. In Meghazi, our interview with the head of the refugee council was interrupted when his 10 year old son came home from school and told us that there was a drone buzzing above his classroom in the morning, making it hard for the children to concentrate on their schoolwork.

The most common complaint of all is about the drones' interference with the TV reception - whenever the signal breaks up you know that it is because of Israeli drone activity in the area. "I like to watch Arabs Got Talent", Rida, our translator at Al Mezan says shyly, "but lately I have not been able to because of the drones". It might not sound like much, but in a place like Gaza, with its closed borders and 12 hour power cuts, it is a final reminder that even the tiniest bit of escapism is at the mercy of the occupation forces.

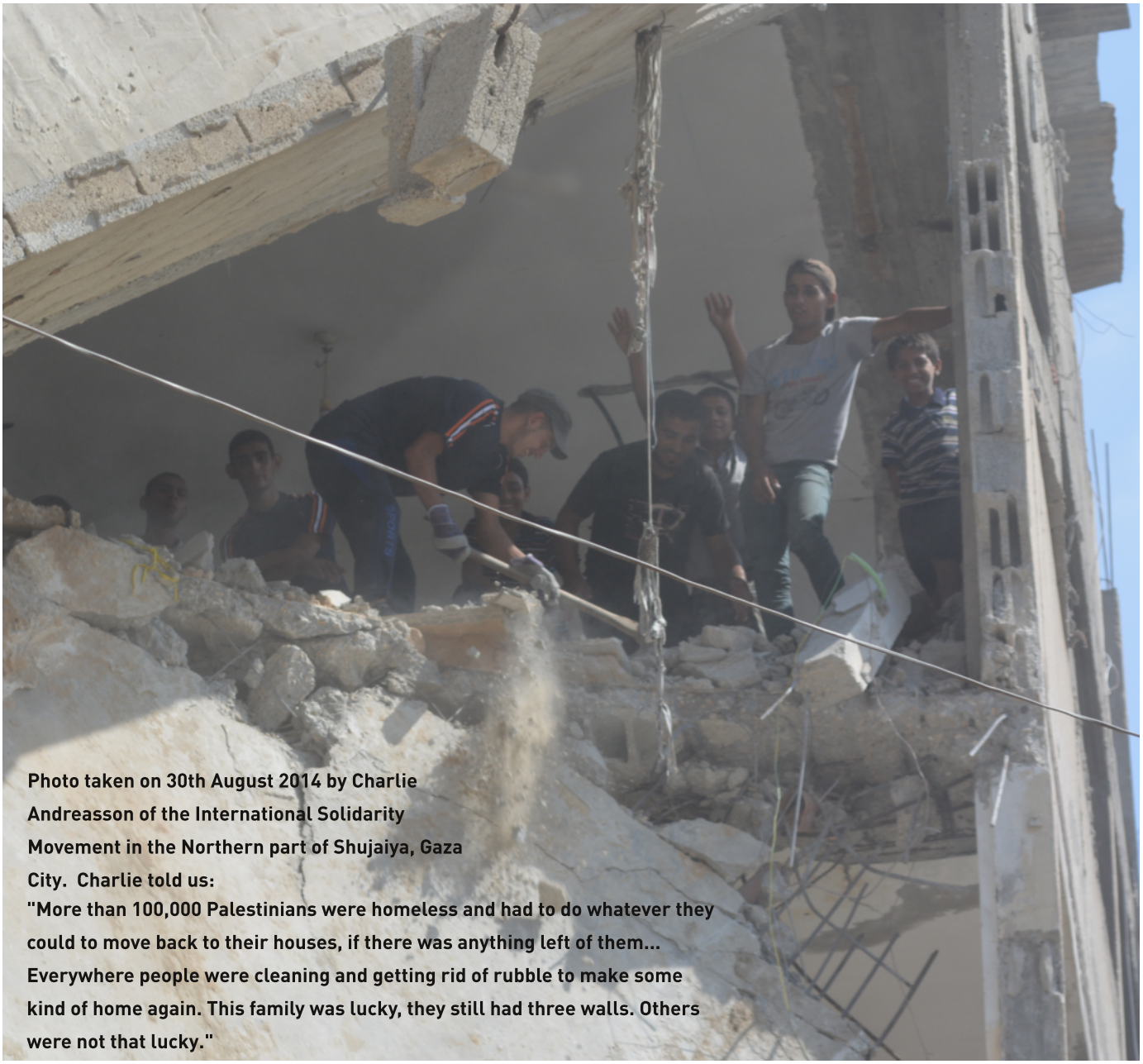


**Photo taken on 30th August 2014 by Charlie Andreasson of the International Solidarity Movement in the Northern part of Shujaiya, Gaza City. Charlie told us:**
**"More than 100,000 Palestinians were homeless and had to do whatever they could to move back to their houses, if there was anything left of them... Everywhere people were cleaning and getting rid of rubble to make some kind of home again. This family was lucky, they still had three walls. Others were not that lucky."**

# "PREVENT THESE ISRAELI WAR CRIMES THAT



Yosra Ash Shawa - Killed by an Israeli drone. Photo given to Corporate Watch by Basil Ash Shawa

**We arranged to meet Basil and Mona Ash Shawa (also spelled Al Shawa) at their apartment in Gaza City in November 2013 to discuss the murder of their only daughter, 18 year old Yosra, in an Israeli drone attack during 'Operation Pillar of Cloud'. During that operation, 201 out of the 255 people who died were killed by drones.**

We picked up Basil from a vigil being held by the families of the victims of the last two Israeli massacres in Gaza. The families had been on hunger strike for 20 days, and were calling on the Palestinian Authority (PA) to provide them with support after the loss of their loved ones. In the past, families of 'martyrs' (Palestinians killed by Israel) received financial aid to help the families to support themselves. However, since the 2009 massacre, which killed over 1400 people in just a few weeks, the PA has stopped these payments. The families have little recourse to demand compensation from the Israeli government, which is responsible for the death of their relatives, so the financial burden is demanded from the PA.

Basil Ash Shawa (in sunglasses) at a sit-in by the families of the victims of the 2009 and 2012 Israeli massacres. Photo taken by Corporate Watch, November 2013.



# KILL OUR DREAMS AND KILL OUR CHILDREN"

Basil took us to meet Mona at the family's new apartment in Gaza City. They had not been there long – their last apartment was damaged in the attack that killed their daughter. Mona and Basil met in Iraq and Yosra was born there. The family moved to Gaza when Yosra was one year old.

Basil flicked through the pictures in his phone's photo album and showed us a picture of the wreckage caused by the rocket from the drone, a clock that stopped at the moment the rockets struck, and his daughter's blood on the floor.

The attack happened at 4.30pm on the November 20 2012 when Yosra and her mother were in the house watching TV in a room on the first floor of the building.

According to Mona: "Yosra was watching the news – she was very affected by the news she was watching. There had been news that there was a shahid (martyr) in Nablus. There was a lot of interference with the TV". According to the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, interference with television sets is a telltale sign that drones are nearby.

"I was looking out of the window for my sons as I was afraid of the bombing. I wanted to call them. Then two rockets were fired into the room we were in and the room next door. Lots of shrapnel flew into the street outside.

I turned around. My daughter stood up. I said, "daughter, are you alive?" I walked over and took her hand. I thought everything was going to be alright, then Yosra fell down. I was trying to get out of the room and see if Yosra was alive or not. I was shocked. The smell of the rocket was everywhere. I couldn't find the door. I had been hit."

Yosra was taken to Al Shifa hospital but died from her injuries. Mona lost a chunk of her leg and had to go to Turkey for treatment.

According to Al Mezan, minutes after the attack on the Shawa family's home, her neighbours gathered in the street outside. A second attack by an Israeli drone killed three of these people: 56 year old Sakher Bulbul, 40 year old Mustafa Ihjella and 21 year old Mahmoud Al-Zhori; a further four people were injured in the attack.

A clock that stopped at the moment the rockets struck the Al Shawa apartment. Photo provided to Corporate Watch by Basil Ash Shawa.



Basil was out at his shop. He heard noises from the direction of his house and then heard over the radio that there had been an attack; he rushed home. He gave us a copy of the video from his mobile phone of the scene on the street as he arrived home. It can be viewed at http://bit.ly/1vblBSe

Human rights workers came to examine the rocket. Al Mezan later determined that the rocket must have been fired by an Israeli drone from the accounts of the survivors and because of the amount of damage that it caused, which was far less than would have been caused by an attack by an F16 plane or Apache helicopter.

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights is representing the Ash Shawa family in trying to lodge a case in the Israeli courts over their daughter's death. Basil showed us a letter his lawyer received from the Israeli military about the case. It reads:

"My respectful friend. Following your memo above claiming that on 20/11/2012 four citizens were killed due to an Israeli air raid directed at Basil Shawa's residential apartment. We inform you that the accident has been inspected by the General Military Prosecutor, and after the investigation it was clarified that no criminal violation took place, and there is no suspicion of the violation of war laws".

The Ash Shawa family apartment in Gaza City after being struck by an Israeli drone. Photo provided to Corporate Watch by Basil Ash Shawa.



# KILL OUR DREAMS AND KILL OUR CHILDREN"

Basil is not convinced by the prosecutor's investigation: "The death of my daughter was a war crime by the Israeli military. There is no excuse for it. When you have an 18 year old daughter that is a dream and that dream was killed. She was my only daughter. Campaigners must prevent these Israeli war crimes that kill our dreams and kill our children. When will it stop? Our case shows that Israel does not care about international law. People should take note".

The Ash Shawa family, along with other families who lost loved ones during the 2012 attack, are still trying to take a case in the Israeli courts over their daughter's death. Basil told us that the Israeli courts have been placing hurdles in the way of the families seeking justice for their loved ones: "The Israeli courts wanted to charge us to lodge each case. However, two months ago, after pressure from the United Nations, the court said the case could start without payment, but we don't yet know if it really will go ahead".

**There must be a response**

Mona told us: "We always dream about Yosra. We cannot forget her."

We asked Mona if she has any message for the solidarity movement. She paused, then explained: "If other people were us what would they do? There must be a response to what happened to us, now that a lot of nations are with us in solidarity".

**"THE DEATH OF MY DAUGHTER WAS A WAR CRIME BY THE ISRAELI MILITARY. THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR IT. WHEN YOU HAVE AN 18 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER THAT IS A DREAM AND THAT DREAM WAS KILLED. SHE WAS MY ONLY DAUGHTER. CAMPAIGNERS MUST PREVENT THESE ISRAELI WAR CRIMES THAT KILL OUR DREAMS AND KILL OUR CHILDREN. WHEN WILL IT STOP? OUR CASE SHOWS THAT ISRAEL DOES NOT CARE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL LAW. PEOPLE SHOULD TAKE NOTE" - Basil Ash Shawa**


Mohammed Azzam

**"On 6 November 2006, I was waiting for a bus to go from the north of Gaza city to school. A kindergarten bus was driving past. A rocket fell down and exploded. Five people died including a six year old child."**

**Mohammed Azzam was 16 at the time of the attack. According to the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, the attack was by an Israeli drone.**[4]

We met Mohammed Azzam at his family's home in Gaza City in November 2013. As we sat down to talk we were disturbed by the sound of an Israeli F-16 overhead. Mohammed has grown up in a besieged city under constant Israeli attack. Just a few days before we met, Gaza had been attacked by Israeli F-16 strikes and we had been kept awake by the sound of drones. For the Palestinian survivors of Israeli drone attacks, their trauma cannot be dealt with and put behind them. Instead, it is an ongoing daily experience, full of triggers that can reopen old wounds.

Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yvd9ZAIte5U&feature=youtu.be to watch a video of Mohammed speaking about his experience. (For English subtitles please click the subtitles icon in the right hand corner of the YouTube panel and turn subtitles on).

Mohammed is a slight, shy young man. His quiet and thoughtful demeanour contrasts with that of his athletic, self assured brothers. Mohammed told us that before the attack he was a keen football player, "in love with football". His health has not improved enough for him to play since the attack. He told us: "Sometimes I hear my friends say "let's go to play football", this affects me as I can't join them".

Mohammed was seriously injured after being hit by shrapnel in the attack. He told us: "Two minutes after the rocket hit I lost consciousness. I was in a coma for five days. After that I received treatment in Gaza for nine days. I had three operations on my stomach at Al Shifa hospital".

Mohammed was then given permission to travel to Israel to have an operation at Ikhilov hospital: "The Israeli military said they were "sorry" and that the attack had been a mistake. I was given a permit to cross into Israel for treatment through the Erez [Beit Hanoun] crossing. I went by ambulance through Erez. I was taken out of the ambulance for 30 minutes, left outside on a stretcher. I had had an operation the day before. It was cold, I had had anaesthetic, it was hard. The first three operations had not been successful, there was shrapnel in my stomach and close to my backbone. Some of the people we met at the hospital in Israel were respectful but some hated Palestinians.

I stayed 2 months at the hospital as they did not want to operate because I was too weak after the three

previous operations. I was on a drip for 50 days, unable to eat and I lost 10 kilos in weight. I was told that I would not walk again, but after a lot of hard work I was able to recover enough to walk".

Even in cases like this, where the Israeli military is directly responsible for attacks on civilians, the Israeli hospital bill is footed by the Palestinian government, while the family of the patient have to pay other associated expenses. According to Mohammed: "The hospital costs were funded 100% by the PA - my father paid for transportation. It cost 4,000 Shekels in transport costs".

The victims of Israeli attacks encounter impossible hurdles when trying to get justice in the Israeli courts. Mohammed told us: "We began a case against the Israeli government with help from the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) but the Israeli court demanded thousands of Shekels to bring the case. Now the case has been closed".

There is a severe shortage of medicines in the Gaza Strip. This is due to the need to coordinate with the Israeli authorities when importing medicine into Gaza, and by the Israeli bans on the import of certain products. During our visit in December 2013 a spokesperson for the Gaza Ministry of Health told Corporate Watch: "141 drugs are not found here [in Gaza]. These are from a list of 470 sorts of drugs that we should always have – they are necessary drugs". A representative of the Union of Health Work Committees in Gaza told us: "At UHWC 300 items are at zero stock. We have a shortage of drugs, especially for chronic illness".

What this shortage of medicine means for people like Mohammed is that the medicine they need to relieve their pain and alleviate chronic conditions often isn't available. According to Mohammed: "I didn't have access to the right medicines because of the Israeli siege".

But the effects of Mohammed's injury were not simply physical. It affected every aspect of his life and had deep psychological impacts.

Mohammed told us: "After the attack I was a year delayed in my education. My nerves were bad and I couldn't concentrate. When you live with pain in your body life is hard and it is difficult to study. I wasn't able to go to classes independently. If I didn't have to face these circumstances I may have had more opportunities. In 2008 when I wanted to study in Egypt there were problems between the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and Israel. Because of this the borders were closed and I wasn't able to continue my studies. It's hard for the injured in social life. They are nervous and it's hard for us to be around healthy people. After my injury I just wanted to be the way I used to be. This made me angry, gave me a negative energy and I kicked out at my friends and family. Sometimes if I was asked a question about what happened it brought back bad memories of the attack that would make me angry and nervous. But now I have developed and I'm able to talk about it. Life did not stop when I was injured. The experience encouraged me to be more effective and work for life to be more beautiful. I have become interested in helping disabled youth. I have worked for a project run by Medical Aid for Palestinians, helping disabled people demand their rights in the north of Gaza for the last three years. But it is coming to an end in February, as the funding is being cut."

We asked Mohammed what he thought of the companies that manufacture the weapons that were used to injure him. He replied: "These technologies must be used for the good of the world. Now all the weapons are in the wrong hands. They should be used to help people. Humanity is the thing that connects us. I hope there will be no more war and that peace will spread all over the world."

# "WE DO NOT NEED JUST WORDS"

**This article tells the story of the Abu Zor family, who lost three family members after the Israeli military fired on their neighbourhood from a drone and an F-16. Their story shows that Israel's practice of firing a warning shot from a drone before destroying homes does not prevent deaths of people not involved in fighting. The family want action from solidarity campaigners against the companies manufacturing the weapons that were used to target them.**

Corporate Watch interviewed the Abu Zor family at their ruined home in the Zaytoun district of Gaza City. Their house had been destroyed in an Israeli F16 attack on 19th November 2012. The bombing came at 3am in the morning during the Israeli attack known as 'Operation Pillar of Cloud', which killed 255 Palestinians in eight days. According to the Gaza based Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, 201 out of 255 of these people were killed by attacks from Israeli drones. When we met them in December 2013 they were still in the process of rebuilding their home.

As we spoke to Hamad and Mohammed Abu Zor, their children gathered to listen to the conversation. We learned that many of these children lost their mothers in the attack. We were encouraged to look at their scars and felt the soft patches in their skulls where they were crushed when the house's roof caved in on them, as if the family need to impress the reality of what happened on us. For these young children, as for many people in Gaza, being involved in telling the story of how they saw their loved ones killed has become a normal occurrence: a duty to make people aware of the real story of what happened to them.

The scene in Zaytoun after the attack by an Israeli F-16, November 2012. Photo courtesy of the Abu Zor family.



**Roof-knocking**
Before the attack the Israeli army had fired on the neighbourhood with a drone, supposedly to warn people to leave the area. This practice of firing a warning shot from a drone has become known as 'roof-knocking'. In reality, roof-knocking is not really a way to protect life, but simply a way for Israeli commanders to avoid accountability by claiming that they did all they could to warn civilians. In fact these 'roof knockings' are an added danger to those beneath the bombs and are not effective as a warning. In the Abu Zor family's case, it had fatal consequences.

**The 'warning'**
Mohammed Abu Zor told us, "I was sleeping when the attack happened. When I fell asleep I could hear the sound of the rockets hitting the houses and the noise of the drones. I only slept for 10 minutes. I woke when the rocket hit. I heard my family scream; the house shook. I went upstairs to check on my brother's flat. I found it difficult to go inside because of all the smoke. I couldn't see anything".

Hamad Abu Zor told us, "my brother's home is next door. I was sleeping. my wife woke me up and said there was crying and screaming in the house next door. I went to check. When I got to the house of my brother he said they were attacked by a drone. They were leaving. I said: "Don't go to a stranger, come and stay with me. Everyone came to my house, all 26 of my brother's family. There were 37 people here in total with me and my brother's family".

One person had been injured by the drone. A four and a half year old child called Mohammed Iyad.

**The second attack**
"Five minutes later the Azzam family, who lived next door to us, was targeted by an Israeli F16. We learned later that they had been targeted because some of the family were part of the Qassam brigades [the military wing of Hamas].

We could hear the noise of the F16 after we heard the strike. Then the power went off and the house collapsed. I couldn't see anything, all my family were shouting for me to get help, I found my wife under the rubble."

Three people were killed: two young women and the same child who had been injured five minutes before. The whole family was injured, 14 of them badly. The house was completely destroyed, along with many of the neighbouring houses on the street.

Mohammed told us that he went back to his house the next day: "The hole in the roof from the rocket was 5cm, then the floor below was 120cm, and the third one was 50cm. The remains of the rocket had penetrated into the ground and the walls were damaged on the ground floor".

**A family made homeless**
The house where Mohammed lived, which had been targeted by the drone, cost $15,000 to repair and left the family homeless for three months. Hamad's house cost $75,000 to rebuild and they were homeless for eight months. The costs were partially covered by the United Nations Development Programme and the Palestinian government, but the rest was footed by the family. No compensation was received from Israel.

We asked the family what they thought about the companies manufacturing drones used by the Israeli army. According to Hamad: "These companies are committing a crime by supplying weapons to Israel. What had these kids done? They should be closed down or prevented from selling weapons to Israel".

A female family member who wanted to remain anonymous said: "These weapons are being tested in Gaza on us. If they brought tanks to fight us they would lose but instead they bring warplanes. These kids now do not have a mother, if their father is sick, who will care for them? We do not need just words.

There is a big profit in it for Israel to market these drones. They want to be the strongest and selling these weapons helps them to do that. Other countries should not buy weapons from Israel. Israel wants war all over the world. We want these factories to be destroyed completely."

# PALESTINIAN FAMILY FORCED FROM THEIR HOME BY ISRAELI DRONE ATTACKS

**We met Abdullah and Ebtihaj Al Habil at their house to the North of Gaza City in December 2013. Abdullah told us that he has been attacked by Israeli drones on two occasions. The attacks have forced them to abandon their home and find new accommodation.**

The first attack came in 2009. Abdullah told us: "My family's house is near here. We were all there when the bombing started. We decided to come here and get some clothes and then we were going to go to the UNWRA school in Shati Camp. I parked the car opposite the house and walked toward the house alone. I got a bag of food and clothes from the house. I could hear the drones in the sky above making a humming sound. I ran with the bag from the house toward the car. They fired. I heard the rocket. I looked round and could see it flying towards me. I jumped out of the way, hit a wall and a splinter from the rocket hit my leg." Abdullah showed us his leg, which had a chunk of flesh missing.



Abdullah points to the spot on his roof where a missile hit during an attack on their house by an Israeli drone and an Apache Helicopter in 2012. Photo taken by Corporate Watch, December 2013.

The second attack came in 2012: "Three pillars of my house were destroyed by firing from the sea, an Apache [helicopter] fired three rockets at the house and machine gunned our water tanks. Then a drone strike hit the roof". He shows us where the drone hit. Abdullah tells us that "the wall of the house was damaged". He hasn't been able to afford to repair it and the roof leaks when it rains.

"The attack happened after midnight. We heard the firing from the Apache and took our five children to take cover in the stairwell. They were firing white phosphorous munitions so we hid under soaking wet sacks to protect ourselves from burns. We could not go out of the house because the warships were firing into the street. We tried to call an ambulance but the phones were blocked. We heard the drone attack happen after the Apache.

"We know that a drone fired on us because one of the three rockets did not explode. The rocket was one metre long, two inches wide. The middle was made of plastic. The two tips were made of iron and at the end was a propeller. Our house was hit by white phosphorous ammunition [probably from the ships]. We tried to put it out but we couldn't, it just kept burning. In the early morning the house across the street was hit by an F-16, killing three people".

# "THEY GET MONEY AND THEY COST OUR LIVES"

**We met the Abu Zneid family in Al Qarara, an agricultural village to the north of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip in November 2013. We had been told about their story by professor Haidar Eid, a member of the Gaza steering committee of The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel [PACBI] and a univerity lecturer. When we asked if he knew anyone we could interview about Israeli drone attacks he said: "You need to hear what happened to this woman I was teaching, She was the most brilliant student I had ever had before she was killed by a drone in 2009".**

The name of Haidar's sudent was Mather Abu Zneid. We interviewed her mum Mariam, dad Hammed, brother Ahmed and sisters Rida and Atheer at their home, about 1.5 km away from where the attack had happened on the 8th of January 2009, during Israel's brutal attack on Gaza, known as 'Operation Cast Lead'. The family's cousin, 30 year old Faten Abdelaziz Abu Zneid, was killed at the same time. The younger sister Rida told us the story:

"Faten came to our house in the morning and told us that it was not safe to stay as Israelis were killing people in the area. Two people in the neighbourhood had been killed during the night and when we heard that we got really scared and got dressed to leave. It was around 10am".

The three sisters Mather, Rida and Atheer, their cousin Faten and mother Mariam quickly left the house to go and seek shelter with their uncle who lived close by, whilst the father Hamed decided to stay behind. As they walked down the road they were shot at by Israeli soldiers who had taken over some Palestinian houses in the border areas, but because they were walking next to a wall they managed to avoid getting hit and just kept on walking. Mariam told us: "We were a group of women. There was no-one else there. We were not carrying anything. There was no reason to shoot at us".

Then suddenly, after hearing the loud buzzing noise of a drone, Mather and Faten, who were walking at the head of the group, were targeted by a missile. They were killed instantly. Rida was only about three metres behind them and told us what she had seen: "The drone was very close and you could see the drone plane clearly. It had small wings and it had two small missiles on each wing. They fired two missiles. They were small. Around ten centimetres wide and", she measured with her hands, "maybe 25-30 centimetres long". After the attack they had to wait for an ambulance for 20 minutes, as the Israelis had cut out all communication systems in the area. They later sought refuge in the Al Qarara United Nations school building.

Mather's father Hamed said that when he heard the attack from their house he had an instinctive feeling that it had targeted his family. As he cycled to the scene on his bike he too was shot at by Israeli troops. "When I got there I could see a hole in the ground from the impact", he said. "There were splintered fragments from the missile on the road. I ask myself every day why they were targeted. They did not have any weapons. We never got an explanation from the Israelis in writing, they just said that it was a mistake. No words can express the feelings we have daily. It is a puzzling thing".

**Ongoing trauma**

It is hard to imagine the horror of watching your relatives be killed in front of your eyes, and the trauma that both the attacks and the omnipresent drones cause to the people of Gaza is substantial.

Although not everyone was physically injured, they have all suffered psychologically. Rida told us that after the attack she was in shock and was unable to speak at all for three days and it was clear that even now, five years later, the family's life is affected daily by what happened. "We are still scared whenever we hear the drones", Atheer said. "Whenever we hear one over our garden, which happens all the time, we have to go inside".

During the latest Israeli attacks, this summer's

'Protective Edge' operation, in which 2,216 Palestinians were killed, Atheer wrote to us saying that "they use the same planes and the same missiles and we are so terrified". This is reality in Gaza, the drones are always overhead and attacks can occur at any time with nowhere for families like the Abu Zneids to go.

According to the Centre for Mind-Body Medicine, which runs programmes in the Gaza Strip, over one third of children in Gaza show signs of post traumatic stress disorder and UNRWA has estimated that symptoms have doubled since Israel's operation 'Pillar of Cloud' in 2012. With large-scale Israeli attacks happening more or less every two years, there is no time for people affected to get help, or to complete any treatment for the condition. In Gaza, the trauma is ongoing.

**"WHY SHOULD THEY MANUFACTURE THESE WEAPONS TO KILL INNOCENT PEOPLE? THEY SHOULD STOP AND CLOSE THOSE FACTORIES. THEY ONLY DO IT FOR THE MONEY. THEY GET MONEY AND THEY COST OUR LIVES. IF THEY ONLY THOUGHT FOR A SECOND ABOUT WHAT THESE WEAPONS CAN DO THEY WOULD STOP. WHAT DO THEY FEEL WHEN THEY SEE KILLED PEOPLE ON THE TV? IF THEY CAME OVER HERE AND LIVED JUST ONE DAY IN THIS AREA, AND HEARD THE BOMBING AND THE DRONES, WHAT WOULD THEY FEEL? I THINK THEY SHOULD LIVE OUR EXPERIENCE" - Rida Abu Zneid**

**Down the drones**

When Mather was killed in 2009 she had just finished studying English at the university, had worked as an teacher of English at the local UNWRA school for three months and had a bright future ahead of her. Mariam described her as a "respectful and moderate woman who never spoke haphazardly and with limitless ambition who never got to see how her life turned out".

More than anything the parents of Mather want answers to why their daughter was murdered, but the family also wants to see an end to weapons exports to and from Israel and welcome any action in support of a two way arms embargo. Rida told us: "We are normal citizens. We are Palestinian, we want to live in peace with citizens in other countries. We want the rights that have been taken from us back".

She had one clear message to the arms dealers making a profit out of their suffering: "Why should they manufacture these weapons to kill innocent people? They should stop and close those factories. They only do it for the money. They get money and they cost our lives. If they only thought for a second about what these weapons can do they would stop. What do they feel when they see killed people on the TV? If they came over here and lived just one day in this area, and heard the bombing and the drones, what would they feel? I think they should live our experience".

# THE COMPANIES BEHIND ISRAEL'S DRONE STRIKES

**The battlefields of Israel's militarism and occupation have proved effective testing grounds for new types of weaponry. Israel's constant state of warfare has ensured a reliable marketplace for Israeli arms manufacturers.**

**According to Drone Wars UK, surveillance drones were first used in Egypt in the lead up to the 1973 Yom Kippur war. The first recorded use of an Israeli drone to help piloted warplanes bomb targets (target acquisition) was in 1982 in the run up to the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon. According to the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, the first recorded use of an armed drone by Israel was in 2004.**

**The experience gleaned during years of military repression has made Israel the largest exporter of drone technology in the world. By marketing their products on the basis of their efficiency at carrying out extra judicial assassinations and the bombing of residential areas in Gaza, Israeli arms companies have profited handsomely.**

**Israel's biggest drone manufacturers have sold drones to over 50 countries worldwide.**

**Elbit and Israel Aerospace Industries, who are profiled below, are the key players in the Israeli drone industry. It is an industry which has built its success on the grief, pain and loss caused to people in Gaza living beneath Israel's drones.**

**The following profiles are intended to enable campaigners to take action against these companies in solidarity with occupied Palestinians.**

**An international campaign has been called for to force investors to divest from the Israeli arms industry and so the final article in this briefing makes the case for the campaign against Barclays, which calls for the bank to stop dealing in shares in Elbit Systems.**

# ELBIT: A COMPANY PROFILE

**Elbit Systems, based in Haifa, is Israel's largest publicly traded arms and security company.**

**Elbit is growing fast. It has absorbed dozens of companies since 2000 and now employs well over 11,500 people, as well as presiding over a considerable global network of subsidiaries and affiliated corporations.**

**Elbit is a company with international reach. In fact, 75% of its market is outside Israel. The company has military contracts with governments in the US, UK and Europe, Africa, Asia and South America.**

**Elbit and Israel's drone wars**

85% of drones used by the Israeli military are manufactured by Elbit. Elbit's armed drones are used by the Israeli army in daily surveillance and attacks in Gaza, according to Defense News.[5] In effect, Elbit markets its equipment on the fact that it has been battle tested on the bodies of people in Gaza. For example, the Elbit website advertises that the Hermes 450 drone is the "backbone of Israel's UAS fleet" and is combat proven.[6]

Despite compelling evidence to the contrary, the Israeli military is not open about its use of armed drones in Gaza. However, Israel's use of drones to conduct surveillance, reconnaissance, target acquisition for piloted planes and assassinations is well documented by grassroots groups, NGOs and cables disclosed by Wikileaks.[7]

The use of drone technology has changed the nature of modern warfare, enabling governments to launch attacks without any need for boots on the ground or a declaration of war. Accordingly, Elbit's drones have been used by the Israeli military to carry out assassinations in Sudan and Egypt at times when Israel was not officially 'at war' with those countries.

**Use of Elbit's equipment in Gaza**

Elbit Hermes drones were one of the two main unpiloted aircraft used to attack people in Gaza during Israel's 2009 Operation Cast Lead attack which killed over 1,400 Palestinians, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW). HRW states that: "The Hermes can stay aloft for up to 24 hours at altitudes of up to 18,000 feet and has an array of optical, infra-red, and laser sensors that allow the operator to identify and track targets as well as to guide munitions in flight. The Hermes carries two Spike-MR (medium range) missiles".

Further, HRW reports that the Hermes drone is equipped with a camera system which allows the drone pilot to see if a person is armed or if they are a child or an adult. The drone's missiles are also equipped with cameras and can be diverted up to the last second. This means that Israel's drone pilots and their commanders would have known that they were targeting civilians and are culpable for war crimes carried out by Elbit drones. HRW has also called for the disclosure of camera footage shot by Hermes drones, to assist in the investigation of war crimes. Needless to say, this request has not been granted.[8]

The assassination of Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari, which precipitated Israel's 2012 Pillar of Cloud assault on Gaza, was carried out by an Elbit Hermes 450 drone according to Defense Today.[9]

Elbit's 7.5 Skylark mini-UAV, operational in the Israeli Army since 2008, was heavily used for support of ground military actions in Israel's 2014 attack on Gaza, 'Operation Protective Edge', which killed 2,216 Palestinians. The Hermes 450s and 900s were also used throughout this attack.[10]

**Deadly ghost ships**

Elbit markets armed remote control boats. Palestinian fishermen have told Corporate Watch that they have been attacked by similar unpiloted boats off the shores of Gaza.[11]

**The West Bank**

Elbit provides electronics for the apartheid wall, which stretches for hundreds of miles across the West Bank, separating people from their loved ones, farmers from their fields, and is intended to grab more land for Israel and its settlements.[12]

The Elbit Skylark drone was used during multiple house arrests by the Israeli military in the West Bank in 2014.[13]

# ELBIT: A COMPANY PROFILE

**The Israeli occupied Syrian Golan**
Elbit has a factory in the settlement of Bnei Yehuda on land which was taken from Syrians by military force in 1967. The settlement is illegal under international law.[14]

**Israeli attacks in Lebanon, Sudan and Egypt**
Elbit's Hermes 450s were used intensively during the second Lebanon war. In 2009 Hermes 450 drones were used in an attack on a convoy in Sudan, which was reportedly bearing arms bound for Gaza.[15] In 2012, Hermes 450s were involved in an assassination in Sinai, Egypt.[16]

**Afghanistan**
The UK has used Hermes 450 drones over Afghanistan and deployed its new Watchkeeper drone, based on the Hermes 450 (see below). Canada has also purchased Elbit Skylark drones for use in Afghanistan.[17]

## Elbit and the UK

**Elbit has been leasing its drones to the UK armed forces for use in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2007. These drones have reportedly flown over Afghanistan for at least 70,000 hours.**

**In 2005, the UK announced that it would buy new drones based on the Hermes 450 design. As a result, Elbit formed the U-TacS partnership (of which it owns a 51% stake) with French company Thales to supply 54 Watchkeeper drones to the Ministry of Defence.**

**Although on the face of it the Watchkeeper is a reconnaissance drone, it has been displayed in several arms fairs bearing missiles.**

**Engines for the Watchkeeper are being produced at Elbit's UAV Engines factory in Shenstone, Staffordshire. British soldiers have travelled to Israel to undergo training as part of the Watchkeeper programme. Testing is currently being carried out from ParcAberporth in West Wales and Boscombe Down in Wiltshire.[18] A Watchkeeper drone was first deployed in Afghanistan in 2014. The programme has been delayed several times but the orders are currently expected to be completed in 2016.[19]**

**Elbit and the US**
Elbit has exported drones to the US and supplied electronic and electro optic systems for the F-16, used by the US Air Force. Elbit has cashed in on its experience, providing electronics to the West Bank apartheid wall and has gained a contract with the US for its border wall with Mexico.[20]

**Elbit and the EU**
Elbit receives generous, taxpayer funded, EU grants under the EU's Horizon 2020 research programme.[21] The company benefited from involvement in 5 European projects under the Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development.[22] Palestinians have called on the EU to end all of its dealings with Israeli arms companies.

**Links with Israeli universities**
Israeli universities are deeply enmeshed with the Israeli arms industry. Students at Haifa's Technion have been awarded grants to access an Elbit research laboratory, while the chairman of the board of governors at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem is Michael Federmann, who also chairs the board at Elbit.[23]

**Industry**
Manufacture of military, 'security' and surveillance equipment. Unpiloted drones, military and naval weapons.

**Traded on**
NASDAQ | TASE (ESLT)

**Revenues/Assets/Sales**
In 2013 the company reported operating revenues of $2.9 billion and total assets of $3.9 billion.[24]

**Employees**
11,674 (mostly in Israel and the US)

**Subsidiaries**[25]

**US subsidiaries**
Elbit Systems of America, Merrimack Operations (Kollsman Inc), Fort Worth Operations, Talladega Operations (IEI), Mclean Operations (ICI), San Antonio Operations (M7), Boca Raton Operations, VSI and RCEVS

**Israeli subsidiaries**
Elop, Elisra SCD, Semi-Conductor Devices (Also owned by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems) and Opgal (50%), Elbit Systems Land and C4, Elbit Security Systems, Cyclone, Kinetics, ITL Optronics, SCD (50%), Tor (50%)

**Australia**
Elbit Systems of Australia

**India**
Halbit

**Brazil**
Ares, AEL, Harpia

**UK subsidiaries**
UAV Engines (UEL), Ferranti Technologies, Elite KL, Instro Precision, UTacS

**Other European subsidiaries**
Elbit (Belgium) and Elbit (Romania), Telefunken (Germany)

**Addresses**

**In the UK**
**Ferranti Technologies**, Cairo House, Greenacres Road, Waterhead, Oldham, Lancashire, OL4 3JA
www.ferranti-technologies.co.uk

Ferranti's website advertises naval, air and ground systems, guided munitions and electro-optical systems for drones.

**UAV Engines Ltd (UEL)**, Lynn Lane, Shenstone, Lichfield, WS14 0DT
uavengines ltd.co.uk

UAV Engines' website advertises engines for drones. In 2010 UAV Engines applied for two military export licences to Israel for engines for drones.[26] The UK government has previously claimed that equipment provided by this firm has "only been issued for the engines to be incorporated in Israel and then exported". However, doubt has been cast on this claim by many commentators, including Amnesty International.

**Elite KL**, Sandy Way, Amington Industrial Estate, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 4DS
www.elitekl.co.uk/military

Elite KL's website advertises military cooling systems.

**Instro Precision**, 15 Hornet Close, Pysons Road Industrial Estate, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 2YD
http://www.instro.com

Instro's website advertises camera systems for surveillance and target acquisition.

**Elbit's Headquarters**
Advanced Technology Center, P.O.B 539, Haifa 31053, Israel

# ELBIT: A COMPANY PROFILE

**Ownership**
Elbit is controlled by the Federmann Family through Federmann Enterprises (46%). Other major investors are Psagot Investment House, Allianz SE, Invesco, Bank of New York Mellon, Morgan Stanley and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board.[27] Barclays and HSBC were both named shareholders during 2014. However, at the time of writing they are no longer listed as shareholders.

**Products manufactured by Elbit**
Drones (see below), helmet mounted display systems, display and weapons systems for Apache helicopters, rockets and guidance systems, fuel tanks for F-16s, unpiloted boats, systems for civil aviation, remote control turrets for armoured personnel carriers, artillery systems, systems to control firing from tanks, remote control ground vehicles, radio and satellite systems, electronic fence systems, thermal imaging cameras, satellite technology for space programmes, Bradley fighting vehicles.

**Shippers**
US shipping firm APL and Maersk, a Danish shipping conglomerate, have both transported Elbit products in the past.[28]

**Drones manufactured by Elbit**
Elbit manufactures the following unpiloted aircraft:

| | |
|---|---|
| Skylark I LE | Skylark II |
| Hermes 90 | Hermes 180 |
| Hermes 450 | Hermes 900 |
| Hermes 1500 | |

According to Drone Wars UK the Hermes 450 and 900 have been used to carry out attacks by the Israeli air force.[29]

**Countries Elbit has exported to** [30]
Argentina (joint partnership)

| | |
|---|---|
| UK | Azerbaijan |
| Botswana | Brazil |
| Chile (on order) | Colombia (on order) |
| Croatia | Georgia |
| Italy (joint venture) | Mexico |
| Singapore | South Africa |
| Uzbekistan | |

**The photo opposite shows activists occupying the roof of Elbit's subsidiary in Shenstone, Staffordshire, UK, closing the factory for 48 hours.**

**In January 2015, the case against the protesters was dropped after the judge in the case ordered that the company provide information on where they export their equipment to.**

**" WHEN I VISITED GAZA AT THE END OF 2013 I TALKED TO PEOPLE WHO HAD LOST LOVED ONES TO DRONE ATTACKS. THEY MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT THEY DON'T HAVE ANY FAITH IN GOVERNMENTS TO HOLD ISRAEL TO ACCOUNT. BUT WHAT THEY DID HAVE FAITH IN WAS THE POWER OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD TO ORGANISE IN SOLIDARITY AND INCREASE THE PRESSURE ON ARMS DEALERS AND POLITICIANS, AND THAT IS WHAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO".**
**- Jessica Nero, rooftop protester**

**Resistance**

Since the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment and sanctions, which was made in 2005, there has been a divestment campaign against Elbit. The Norwegian state pension fund, leading Danish bank Danske Bank, Dutch pension giant ABP and the Swedish AP pension fund have all divested their shares. Investment experts have told campaigners that Elbit now appears on most blacklists prepared by 'socially responsible' investment research companies.

Very few European banks appear on a list of institutional shareholders invested in Elbit (published by Nasdaq.com), suggesting that most European banks believe that the company's role in Israeli war crimes make it an inappropriate investment.

In 2011 a Palestinian civil society call demanded a two way embargo on arms sales to and from the Israeli state and Israeli companies. Anti-militarist campaigners have targeted Elbit in line with this call and launched campaigns calling for investors to divest their shares from the company.

The campaign has gathered momentum since the Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2014. During the attacks, activists occupied the roof of Elbit's subsidiary in Shenstone, closing the factory for 48 hours. A similar occupation was held in Australia. Regular demonstrations are currently being held at Elbit's factory in Shenstone.

Campaigners in Wales have been protesting for years against the flying of drones at ParcAberporth. See www.bepj.org.uk

Activists intensified the campaign for Barclays to divest from Elbit in Winter 2014, holding pickets, blockades and demonstrations at Barclays branches. In a day of action in November 2014, 15 simultaneous actions were held against Barclays branches across the UK.

Resistance has also focused on Thales, Elbit's partner in the Watchkeeper programme. In June 2014 a demonstration was held at the company HQ in London and in October 2014, a rooftop occupation was held at a Thales plant in Glasgow.

Campaigners are pressuring the EU to exclude Elbit and other Israeli arms companies from its research funding. See http://bit.ly/1hjOSWu



# ISRAEL AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES

**Israel Aerospace Industries is one of Israel's biggest arms companies. Founded in 1953 as Bedek, IAI has long been at the forefront of Israel's arms production and export. It also develops systems for civil aviation. In 2013, 73% of IAI's sales revenues came from exports.**

## IAI and Israel's drone wars

IAI was one of the earliest developers of drone technology and launched its first surveillance drone, the IAI Scout, in 1979. Since then the company has launched a number of drone models (see below). Drone development is handled by IAIs MALAT divisions. IAI describes its unpiloted aerial systems as 'combat proven' and writes on its website of its drones' "unsurpassed track record of over 1,200,000 operational flight hours for over 50 users on five continents". According to Drone Wars UK, IAI has exported their UAVs, sometimes through joint venture agreements, to various European countries, as well as South America, Australia, Canada and India, and the company has a growing market in Africa.

**IAI and Gaza**

Most of IAI's unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are surveillance drones, but the Heron 1 and Heron TP both have strike capabilities and have been used in Gaza. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW),[31] the Heron can fly up to 40 hours and can carry four Spike missiles. It is also used for surveillance and to identify targets on the ground.

Drone Wars UK[32] reports that Israel was deploying armed Heron 1 drones during the 'Operation Summer Rains' attack in Gaza in 2006.

The IAI Heron TP is Israel's biggest drone, with a wing span of 26 metres. It was first used during 'Operation Cast Lead' in Gaza during 2008-2009.[33] When IAI's Heron TP is marketed as 'combat proven' it means that it has been tried out on the people of Gaza with fatal consequences.

**Attacks on Lebanon**

IAI's Searcher and Scout drones were both used for surveillance in Israel's attacks on Lebanon in the 1990s and early 2000s. It is believed that armed Heron drones were used in the assault on Lebanon in 2006.[34]

**IAI and the US**[35]

During the first Gulf War, IAI Pioneer drones were used by the US navy to guide shells fired from battleships.

# (IAI): A COMPANY PROFILE

**Industry**
A 'defence' company which develops and produces a variety of products for both military and civilian markets in Israel and around the world, including unpiloted aerial vehicles (UAVs), fighter jets and naval and ground 'defence' systems. In 2013, military equipment accounted for 73% of the company's sales, with only 27% going to civilian markets.[36]

**Traded on**
TASE

**Revenues/Assets/Sales**
In 2013 the company reported an operating income of $84 million. The company recorded total assets of over $5 billion and net sales of over $3.5 billion.[37]

**Employees**
16,000

**Drones manufactured by IAI**[38]

| | |
|---|---|
| IAI Scout | Bird Eye 400 |
| Mini Panther | Mosquito 1 |
| Mosquito 1.5 | Panther |
| Harpy | Searcher I |
| I-View-150 | Searcher II |
| Searcher III | B-Hunter |
| Heron 1 (Shoval) | Heron TP (Eitan) |

**Subsidiaries**
ELTA Systems Ltd (Israel)
ELTA North America (based in Maryland, US)
European Advanced Technology (EAT)

**Addresses**
Website
www.iai.co.il

Head quarters
Ben Gurion International Airport, 70100, Israel.
Phone: 00972-3-9353111
email: corpmkg@iai.co.il

**Representatives**
The company has representatives around the world, including in Asia, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Korea, North America and Russia.

**Ownership**
IAI is fully owned by the Israeli state. It is the largest state owned 'defence' and aerospace company in Israel.

**Countries IAI has exported to**[39]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Angola | Ecuador | South Korea |
| Australia | France | Spain |
| Azerbaijan | Germany | Sri Lanka |
| Belgium | India | Taiwan |
| Brazil | Indonesia | Thailand |
| Canada | Russia | Turkey |
| China | Singapore | United States |
| | | UK |

**Resistance**
In October 2014, more than 20 activists from London Palestine Action occupied the London offices of Airbus over its involvement with IAI. Staff were unable to arrive for work and senior executives agreed to meet the campaigners in a bid to end the occupation.

The two companies are working together on the Harfang drone for the French Air Force. The Harfang drone is based on the IAI Heron.

**"BY WORKING WITH ISRAELI AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES TO DEVELOP A DRONE THAT HAS BEEN USED TO DELIBERATELY ATTACK PALESTINIAN CIVILIANS, AIRBUS IS PROFITING FROM ISRAEL'S WAR CRIMES.**

**COMPANIES SUCH AS AIRBUS MUST STOP CONTRIBUTING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. DRONES ARE 'FIELD TESTED' ON THE PALESTINIAN POPULATION BEFORE THEY ARE MARKETED TO THE REST OF WORLD"**
**- Sophie, London Palestine Action**

# BARCLAYS BOYCOTTED OVER

First published on Electronic Intifada on 21 November 2014. Written by Tom Anderson and Michael Deas.

**UPDATE: The British bank Barclays came under fire last year for its holdings in Elbit Systems, Israel's largest military company and the main supplier of drones used to attack and kill Palestinian civilians in Gaza. The bank was the named owner of $2.9 million worth of shares in Elbit.**

**As of February 2015 the shares in Elbit held by Barclays have been sold. However, there is no suggestion this is due to a policy change so Barclays may deal with Elbit shares again in the future. Barclays currently trades in shares in arms companies, including Lockheed Martin, Caterpillar, Exelis and Boeing, all of which sell weapons to Israel.**

**We wrote in November 2014:**

More than 1.7 million people have signed a petition calling on Barclays to divest from "projects that finance illegal settlements and the oppressive occupation of the Palestinian people", and campaigners have occupied and protested at bank branches across the UK.

Elbit's share price rose in July 2014 off the back of the extensive use of its technology during Israel's summer massacre in Gaza, which killed more than 2,100 Palestinians, including some 500 children.

The company advertises its products as "combat proven" and recently reported a backlog in orders worth $6.2 billion.

Through its holdings in Elbit Systems, Barclays is profiting directly from Israel's deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Such targeting has been described by Amnesty International and Palestinian human rights organisations as amounting to war crimes.

Barclays market analysts have also talked up Elbit shares, recently rating their stock as "positive."

Protesters block the front doors of Barclays in Brighton, UK, while demonstrators hand out leaflets to the public.



# ISRAEL ARMS TRADE SHARES

**Call for action**
Elbit Systems supplies Israel with Hermes drones that have been used to deliberately attack and kill Palestinian civilians, including during this summer's onslaught on Gaza.

According to data from the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, armed drones killed more than 1,000 Palestinians in Gaza between 2000 and 2010.

Analysis of Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reports by drone researcher Mary Dobbing found that 800 drone strikes took place within a fifty-day period during Israel's most recent attack on Gaza.

In a joint statement published in October 2014 (available at http://bit.ly/1DSwRcp), Palestinian student groups described Barclays as "complicit in the war crimes carried out in Gaza using Elbit's equipment" and called on UK students to close their accounts with Barclays.

**"SINCE BARCLAYS REFUSES TO END THIS UNETHICAL PRACTICE [OF] INVESTING AND DEALING IN SHARES IN ELBIT DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEIR DRONES KILL US, OUR CHILDREN, OUR PARENTS, OUR BROTHERS, SISTERS AND FRIENDS, WE ASK FOR STUDENTS TO CLOSE THEIR STUDENT BARCLAYS ACCOUNT AND TELL BARCLAYS WHY"**
**- Joint statement from Palestinian student groups**

**Normal practice?**
But in a bizarre move, Barclays appears to be denying that holding shares in Elbit amounts to profiting from Israeli militarism.

In a statement[40] published at the height of Israel's massacre of Gaza, Barclays claimed:

"Barclays holds a very small number of shares in Elbit Systems Ltd on behalf of clients and to hedge exposure against customers facing transactions. Holding shares in companies on behalf of clients, as well as maintaining appropriate hedging strategies, is normal practice for banks, but does not equate to an investment made by Barclays."

Barclays repeated the main thrust of this defence in a recent email exchange with Corporate Watch.

Even if true, holding shares on behalf of others hardly seems like an adequate defence: Barclays is facilitating investment in Elbit and collecting a healthy commission on each trade in Elbit shares.

But it is the reference to "hedging strategies" where Barclays' claims really start to come unstuck. In this context, hedging is the practice of buying a number of shares that one is confident will rise in price to offset potential losses that may be incurred by a more risky investment. In other words, Barclays is

investing in Elbit shares to make money from the predicted rise in their price.

**"Ducking its commitments"**

Ryan Brightwell, a researcher with the Banktrack network of campaign groups tracking the operations and investments of private sector banks, finds no ambiguity:

"A bank has a choice of whether or not to make an investment on behalf of clients," he explained. "Shareholdings in Elbit for hedging purposes are investments, and could easily be replaced by other shares with a similar risk profile.

Barclays has a policy commitment[41] to remedy human rights violations it is linked to. But instead it is ducking its commitments and continuing to deal in a company which provides drones that have been used to bomb Gaza," he said.

Corporate Watch asked Barclays how it squares its trading in Elbit shares with the bank's claim not to invest in the arms trade.

Barclays spokesperson Will Bowen told Corporate Watch: "We are not 'investing' in these companies, i.e. seeking to generate a return. We are simply holding the shares on behalf of clients — this is standard practice. Barclays Stockbrokers offer a range of companies for customers to invest in ... It's not for us to tell customers what they can and can't invest in."

When pushed for further detail on the use of Elbit shares for the purposes of hedging, which clearly

**Out of step**

Barclays describes its holdings in Elbit as part of "normal practice". But Barclays is badly out of step with other major European investors (see the profile of Elbit on page 25 to read about European investors pulling out of Elbit). Financial data provider Orbis states that Barclays also holds 4.25 percent of the total shares in BAE Systems. The huge UK military company has sold components used in F16 fighter jets to Israel and has applied for licenses to export other military equipment to Israel.

The bank is also a named investor in General Dynamics, Raytheon, Meggitt and four other companies that provide military equipment to Israel.

**Support for apartheid**

When South Africa was under white minority rule, a Barclays subsidiary made loans to the apartheid government and bought up millions of defence bonds.

The campaign against Barclays was one of the most visible forms of solidarity in the UK with the South African struggle against apartheid.

A campaign encouraging students to boycott Barclays meant that the bank ultimately saw its share of the student market drop from 27 percent to around 15 percent.

Encouraged by this popular movement, many local councils, trade unions and charities divested from Barclays.

**Modern capitalism**

In 1986, Barclays bank announced its withdrawal from South Africa after a decade of high-profile campaigning.

In addition to being remembered as one of the big UK companies that took the longest to end its support for apartheid, Barclays is known today as being one of the clearest examples of everything that is rotten with modern capitalism.

In the past few years alone, Barclays has been exposed as having avoided more than £500 million ($783 million) in taxes, promoted overseas tax havens, manipulated inter-bank interest rates and defrauded customers.

Just recently, it was involved in rigging currency markets, all the while continuing to pay out billions in bonuses to its top executives.

The question now is whether or not Barclays will continue to defend its investment in Elbit and thus add active support for Israeli apartheid to its long list of crimes.

# ISRAEL ARMS TRADE SHARES

**WE ARE CALLING ON BARCLAYS TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ELBIT SHARES. BARCLAYS KNOWS FULL WELL THAT IN TRADING WITH ELBIT SHARES IT'S PROFITING FROM ISRAEL'S MASSACRES OF THE PALESTINIANS, WHICH ARE CARRIED OUT BY ELBIT DRONES"**
**- Occupier of Barclays in Brighton, UK**




## END NOTES


1. Figures provided to Corporate Watch by the Al Mazan Centre for Human Rights February 2015.
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3. United Nations (2009), Report of the United Nations fact finding mission on the Gaza conflict – http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2009/09/15/UNFFMGCReport.pdf, page 13.
4. The Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights record of the incident says: "At approximately 7:05 am on Monday 6 November 2006, an Israeli drone fired a missile targeting a group of students near Al Sheikh Zayed crossroads opposite Jabaliya Youth Club. The students were on their way to school, which is 700 metres away from the place of attack. As a result, Ramzi Al Shrafi, 16, was killed and other six students were injured". (Correspondence with Corporate Watch, February 2014).
5. Defense News, Israeli Forces Praise Elbit UAVs in Gaza Op: http://bit.ly/1xSHpmS (2014).
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10. iHLS, New Israeli Drone Joins Fighting In Gaza, i-hls.com/2014/07/new-israeli-drone-joins-fighting-gaza (2014)
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22. War on Want (2013)
23. Corporate Watch, Targeting Israeli Apartheid, (2011), page 79-80
24. Elbit, Annual report, ir.elbitsystems.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=61849&p=irol:reportsAnnual (2013)
25. Elbit website, Company Profile, http://bit.ly/1ER4EpS (2013)
26. Campaign Against Arms Trade, https://www.caat.org.uk/resources/mapping/organisation/5233
27. Orbis database
28. Corporate Watch, Targeting Israeli Apartheid, (2011), page 69 and Import Genius, https://www.importgenius.com/suppliers/elbit-systems-land
29. Drone Wars UK (2014)
30. Drone Wars UK (2014) and Parliamentary Hansard (October 2014)
31. Human Rights Watch (2009), Section 4
32. Drone Wars UK (2014), page 10
33. T. Goldenburg, Huffington Post, Israel Unveils New Drone Fleet that can reach Iran (2010)
34. Drone Wars UK (2014), page 10
35. Drone Wars UK (2014), page 7
36. IAI website, http://www.iai.co.il/Shared/UserControls/Print/PopUp.aspx?lang=en&docid=45888
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38. Drone Wars UK (2014), page 7
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Unpiloted aircraft, known as drones, have become Israel's weapon of choice in its attacks on Gaza.

In 2012 drones killed more people in Gaza than any other aircraft. In Israel's 'Operation Protective Edge' attack, 37% of those killed died in drone attacks.

In 2013 Corporate Watch visited Gaza for two months to interview the survivors of drone attacks and human rights workers about the effect of living beneath the drones.

The interviews tell the stories of the survivors and highlight their calls for support from the global solidarity movement.

This briefing compiles the interviews and gives short profiles of some of the companies profiting from Israel's drone wars: Elbit and IAI.

We hope that reading this briefing will inspire you to take action in solidarity with people living under siege in Gaza. As one survivor of a drone strike told us: "We do not need just words".




Corporate Watch
February 2015

ISBN 978-1-907738-17-3