

How American tech giants are aiding Israel's AI-powered genocide in Gaza

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By Maryam Qarehgozlou / PRESS TV

Microsoft, a multinational tech giant headquartered in Washington, fired two employees last week after they organized a vigil at the company's headquarters for Palestinians killed in the year-long Israeli-American genocidal war on Gaza.

Abdo Muhammad and Hossam Nasr, the two dismissed Microsoft employees of Egyptian descent, were both actively involved in an employee coalition called "No Azure for Apartheid."

This group has been vocal for months in opposing Microsoft's sale of its cloud-computing technology to the Israeli regime, citing concerns over gross human rights violations and the company's support of Israel's genocidal practices and war crimes against Palestinians in Gaza.

Microsoft, a global leader in cloud services, computer software, and hardware, confirmed the termination of several employees "in accordance with its internal policies" without providing specific details regarding the dismissals.

"So I guess the cat is out of the bag. I was fired from Microsoft on Thursday, hours after a vigil we organized to honor and remember the lives of Palestinians killed by American-funded and Microsoft-empowered Israeli genocide," Nasr wrote in a thread of posts on X, formerly Twitter.

Nasr, however, emphasized that his dismissal, as well as the unfair treatment of other Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim employees at Microsoft, is not an isolated incident.

He said it is part of a larger pattern of discriminatory and repressive behavior that has been ongoing since at least 2021 against anyone with opposite views.

"This did not come out of nowhere, but follows a pattern stretching back to 2021 of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, silencing, and repressing against me and our Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim communities at Microsoft, for daring to humanize Palestinians," he wrote.

Nasr asserted that his dismissal from Microsoft will not silence his voice or deter him from continuing to speak out on issues related to Palestinian rights and Microsoft's complicity in perpetuating war crimes.

"If they think firing me will silence me, they couldn't be more wrong. The more they try to silence us, the louder our voice gets. We will not stop, we will not rest!"

Google, the California-headquartered multinational tech company, fired more than 50 workers earlier this year for protesting the company's contract with the Israeli regime, known as "Project Nimbus."

This \$1.2 billion deal was signed in 2021 by Google and Amazon to provide cloud computing and artificial intelligence services to the regime in Tel Aviv.

Cloud computing helps the Israeli military in Gaza as well as in the occupied West Bank and Lebanon by providing advanced data storage and processing capabilities.

Reports indicate that the Israeli military has utilized cloud services to store vast amounts of surveillance information on individuals in Gaza as well as Lebanon.

Furthermore, these cloud providers supply AI capabilities and services that have enhanced the military's efficiency since the onset of the war on Gaza.

Amid the Israeli genocide in Gaza, workers at Google and Amazon have stepped up pressure on their companies to cut ties with the regime, including the controversial Project Nimbus.

In July, at the "IT for IDF" conference in Rishon Lezion, near Tel Aviv, Col. Racheli Dembinsky, commander of the Israeli military's Center of Computing and Information Systems, confirmed that Israel is

using cloud storage and artificial intelligence services provided by these US-based tech giants in its devastating war against the Gaza Strip.

Dembinsky's lecture slides featured the logos of Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud, and Microsoft Azure, indicating the Israeli military's overwhelming reliance on their technology for data processing and management.

This revelation again highlighted the collaboration between these tech companies and the Israeli military amid the genocidal war on Gaza, which has already claimed more than 43,100 innocent lives, most of them women and children.

Dembinsky said in her speech that working with these companies has granted the Israeli military "very significant operational effectiveness" in the Gaza Strip.

Google

In 2021, when Google and Amazon Web Services (AWS) entered into the \$1.2 billion Project Nimbus, they agreed to provide the Israeli regime and its military with cloud computing services, AI, and machine learning capabilities.

A year later, Google established a cloud center in the Israeli-occupied territories as part of this collaboration.

Through Project Nimbus, Google offers advanced AI capabilities such as facial detection, automated image categorization, object tracking, and sentiment analysis to evaluate the emotional content of images, speech, and text.

Under this agreement, Google grants the Israeli war ministry a secure "landing zone" within its cloud infrastructure for data storage and processing, as well as access to Google's AI services.

Google has consistently maintained that its Nimbus contract only provides commercial services for Israeli ministries, such as finance, healthcare, transportation, and education.

However, documents and statements made by Israeli officials reveal a different story.

Despite concerns raised about Israel's deployment of AI in warfare, particularly the carnage in Gaza, a company document viewed by TIME in April showed that Google expanded its partnership with the regime in March 2024, allowing multiple units to utilize Google's automation technologies.

Moreover, Israel has long used Google-provided biometric surveillance, including facial recognition technology, to maintain control over Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East al-Quds.

Following the Israeli military ground invasion of Gaza in October last year, the army expanded this surveillance to Gaza, with soldiers employing Google Photos for biometric identification.

On November 19, 2023, Palestinian poet Mosab Abu Toha was misidentified and arbitrarily detained by Israeli forces at a checkpoint while fleeing North Gaza, due to this system.

He reported being blindfolded, interrogated, beaten, and later released without explanation.

Since October 7, 2023, The Israeli regime also has been running ads on Google's search engine and YouTube, disseminating false information about the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

These ads featured unsubstantiated claims that UNRWA is linked to Hamas and employs “terrorists” to discredit UNRWA and undermine its work in supporting Palestinians in Gaza.

Amazon Web Services (AWS)

A recent investigation by +972 Magazine and Local Call uncovered that the Israeli army employs Amazon’s cloud service to store surveillance data on individuals in Gaza while obtaining AI tools from Google and Microsoft for military operations.

AWS provides Israel’s Military Intelligence Directorate with extensive data storage capabilities, allowing for the collection of mass surveillance information on “almost everyone” in Gaza.

According to the investigation, AWS services have occasionally played a role in confirming airstrike targets for the Israeli military.

Furthermore, through Project Nimbus, Amazon’s subsidiary AWS established a cloud region in Israeli-occupied territories in August 2023, enabling the regime to transfer significant workloads to the cloud.

One major client of this cloud service is Bank Leumi, a prominent Israeli bank criticized for funding war crimes and illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank.

AWS also collaborates with Palantir, an American data analysis firm that provides militaries with artificial intelligence models, assisting customers in enhancing their war-fighting capabilities.

In January, Palantir agreed to a strategic partnership with the Israeli ministry of military affairs to supply technology to help the Zionist regime in its war effort.

Microsoft

Microsoft has also had a long-standing business relationship with Israel’s military and spying establishments, which has only become stronger since October 7th last year.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu once described this partnership as “a marriage made in heaven but recognized here on Earth.”

Microsoft Azure, the company’s primary cloud computing platform, has been extensively used by Israel’s military and was considered the Tel Aviv regime’s main cloud provider.

Last year, almost a month into the Israeli genocidal war on Gaza, Microsoft introduced a new cloud region in Israel and has provided AI and cloud services for military purposes.

Microsoft also supports various Israeli initiatives by offering services used for the expansion of illegal settlement, military, police, and the Israeli Prison Service (IPS).

As of October 2024, there are over 10,000 Palestinians held illegally in Israeli detention centers, almost all of them held without charges or trial.

According to the UN Human Rights Office as well as verified testimonies provided by rights groups, Palestinian prisoners from Gaza, including hundreds of medical professionals, UN staffers, women, and children, face torture, ill-treatment, and sexual violence while in prolonged, secret, and incommunicado detention.

Reports also indicate that since the war began against Gaza, numerous Palestinians residing outside Gaza have had their Microsoft email accounts and Skype access suspended without explanation.

These suspensions have led to difficulties accessing bank accounts, disruptions to work, and further isolation from their families in Gaza, who have already been impacted by multiple internet outages in the past year.

#NoTechForGenocide

Tech companies' provision of services to Israel has made them complicit in the perpetration of grave human rights violations, as they are contributing to Israel's acts of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, according to anti-Israel tech workers and campaigners.

These grave violations are currently under investigation by both the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Despite facing repercussions, including dismissal from their jobs, tech workers remain steadfast in their opposition to providing services to the apartheid Israeli regime.

These individuals continue to express their objections, underscoring their commitment to uphold ethical principles and respect for human rights even at the risk of personal and professional consequences.

Nasr on his thread of posts challenged those who ask about their fear of consequences for speaking out against Microsoft's complicity in the Gaza genocide by turning the question back on them.

"I am often asked: are you not scared of being fired? Are you not scared of being deported? And my answer is always: Are YOU not scared? Are you NOT scared of being complicit in the Holocaust of our time," he wrote.

"Are YOU not scared of being silent in the face of one of the gravest moral tragedies of our time? Are YOU not scared of what you will tell your children and grandchildren when they ask you where you were when the Gaza genocide was happening?"

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/368689-how-american-tech-giants-are-aiding-israels-ai-powered-genocide-in-gaza>



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