

Google workers revolt over \$1.2 billion contract with Israel

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Google workers had previously staged rallies in front of the company's offices in various cities, demanding an end to its cooperation with the Israeli regime. (File Photo)

New York, April 10 (RHC)-- A growing number of Google employees have joined protests calling on the company to drop the \$1.2 billion contract that provides Israel with cloud and machine learning services,

codenamed Project Nimbus.

Time magazine's recent coverage highlights the increasing influence of No Tech For Apartheid, a protest group that has taken a stand against Google's collaboration with Israel and now has around 40 Google staff among its members.

Last week, Eddie Hatfield, a 23-year-old Google Cloud software engineer, stood up at Mind the Tech, an annual conference promoting the Israeli tech industry, shouting, "I am a Google Cloud software engineer, and I refuse to build technology that powers genocide, apartheid, or surveillance!" He was supported by the anti-Zionist Israeli groups Shoresh and Jewish Voices for Peace.

Two Google employees also recently announced their resignation from the tech giant due to the company's involvement in the \$1.2 billion joint effort between Google and Amazon to provide AI and cloud computing services to the Israeli administration and military, according to the Israeli finance ministry, which announced the deal in 2021.

No Tech for Apartheid's supporters say that their movement is gaining momentum amid fresh revelations about AI's involvement in Israel's bombing campaign in Gaza and the recent killings of foreign aid workers by the Israeli military.

Google's Nimbus is said to entail the establishment of a highly secure Google Cloud instance within the Israeli occupied territories. This move would allow the Israeli administration to conduct extensive data analysis, AI training, database hosting, and other robust computing tasks using Google's cutting-edge technology. Notably, this arrangement would provide Israel with minimal oversight from the company.

Neither Google, Amazon, nor Israel has described the specific capabilities on offer to Tel Aviv under the contract.

Google workers are raising concerns about the misuse of the company's AI and cloud computing tools for surveillance, military targeting, or weaponization. This comes as the contract terms reportedly prohibit Google and Amazon from blocking specific entities, such as the Israeli military, from using their services, and from ending the contract in response to public pressure.

No Tech for Apartheid has censured Google and Amazon for playing a role in the genocidal attacks on Gaza by partnering with Israel in the billion-dollar agreement. The organization demands that "companies immediately cancel Project Nimbus and end their complicity in Israel's war crimes."

Current and former Google workers also say that they are fearful of speaking up internally against Project Nimbus or in support of Palestinians, due to what some described as fear of retaliation. However, the movement seems to be gaining momentum amid international call for ending whatsoever support to Israel that could be used against the people of Palestine.

"We're not going to stop," says Zelda Montes, a YouTube software engineer, of No Tech for Apartheid. "I can say definitively that this is not something that is just going to die down. It's only going to grow stronger."

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