

The corporations aiding genocide

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I never imagined I would read a report like this in my lifetime, and yet it is in [The Guardian](#), is corroborated elsewhere, and it is about a plan put forward by the Israeli government, with no doubt the backing of others, including Trump and, most likely, connections in the UK:

Israel's defence minister has laid out plans to force all Palestinians in Gaza into a camp on the ruins of Rafah, in a scheme that legal experts and academics described as a blueprint for crimes against humanity.

Israel Katz said he has ordered Israel's military to prepare for establishing a camp, which he called a "humanitarian city", on the ruins of the city of Rafah, Haaretz newspaper reported.

Palestinians would go through "security screening" before entering, and once inside would not be allowed to leave, Katz said at a briefing for Israeli journalists.

Israeli forces would control the perimeter of the site and initially "move" 600,000 Palestinians into the area - mostly people currently displaced in the al-Mawasi area.

Let's be blunt about this: it is a plan for a concentration camp from which Gazan Palestinians could not ever emerge again, as the plan is laid out. This is not humanitarian. This is about the end game of genocide that has used ethnic cleansing to achieve this goal.

And what is clear is that the world's corporations will be more than willing to lend a hand. As Francesca Albanese [notes in her report](#) to the UN in her role as special rapporteur:

FROM ECONOMY OF OCCUPATION TO ECONOMY OF GENOCIDE

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967

Summary

This report investigates the corporate machinery sustaining Israel's settler-colonial project of displacement and replacement of the Palestinians in the occupied territory. While political leaders and governments shirk their obligations, far too many corporate entities have profited from Israel's economy of illegal occupation, apartheid and now, genocide. The complicity exposed by this report is just the tip of the iceberg; ending it will not happen without holding the private sector accountable, including its executives. International law recognizes varying degrees of responsibility - each requiring scrutiny and accountability, particularly in this case, where a people's self-determination and very existence are at stake. This is a necessary step to end the genocide and dismantle the global system that has allowed it.

That report is staggeringly important. It states that it is not just governments and those who have served in them, including those of the UK, who should be accountable for their actions, but corporations should be too. As she notes towards the end of the report, in what might be framed as a part of her conclusion:

While life in Gaza is being obliterated and the West Bank is under escalating assault, this report shows why Israel's genocide continues: because it is lucrative for many. By shedding light on the political economy of an occupation turned genocidal, the report reveals how the forever-occupation has become the ideal testing ground for arms manufacturers and Big Tech - providing boundless supply and demand, little oversight, and zero accountability - while investors and private and public institutions profit freely. Too many influential corporate entities remain inextricably financially bound to Israel's apartheid and militarism.

And its message is clear:

Arms companies have turned over near record profits by equipping Israel with cutting-edge weaponry that has obliterated a virtually defenceless civilian population. The machinery of global construction equipment giants has been instrumental in razing Gaza to the ground, preventing the return and reconstitution of Palestinian life. Extractive energy and mining conglomerates, while providing sources of civilian energy, have fuelled Israel's military and energy infrastructures - both used to create conditions of life calculated to destroy the Palestinian people.

And while the genocide rages on, the inexorable process of violent annexation continues. Agribusiness still sustains expansion of the settlement enterprise. The largest online tourism platforms continue normalizing the illegality of Israeli colonies. Global supermarkets continue to stock Israeli settlement products. And universities worldwide, under the guise of research neutrality, continue to profit from an economy now operating in genocidal mode. Indeed, they are structurally dependent on settler-colonial collaborations and funding.

Business continues as usual, but nothing about this system, in which businesses are integral, is neutral. The enduring ideological, political and economic engine of racial capitalism has transformed Israel's displacement-replacement economy of occupation into an economy of genocide. This is a "joint criminal enterprise", where the acts of one ultimately contribute to a whole economy that drives, supplies and enables this genocide.

If you thought there was such a thing as corporate social responsibility, give up the idea. What this report shows is that the ***lesson from Milton Friedman in 1970 has been well and truly learned by large parts of the multinational corporation community. They believe what he said then, which was that the sole purpose of business is to make a profit, within the rules laid down by law.***

Of course, the arms companies that are supplying the Israeli government with the means to pursue genocide, and the equipment manufacturers who are supplying it with the means to clear people from their homes in both Gaza and the West Bank, and all the others who are exploiting the situation in Gaza for commercial advantage, would argue that they are operating within the rules established by Israel, with the active support of their own domestic governments. There is, however, no defence for this. If they really do not think that international law exists, and that the Nuremberg trials after World War II did not happen, and that they could not be held similarly accountable for their own part in more than 50,000 deaths, and in ethnic cleansing, genocide, and now mass internment in concentration camps, they have not only failed to learn the lesson from history, but they are consciously ignoring every ethical responsibility that they have as human beings to their fellow human beings, here on Earth.

Francesca Albanese's report makes for grim reading. But what it really makes clear is that the idea of ethical capitalism is very hard to sustain in the face of the evidence that many major corporations will, apparently, do anything to make a profit. I stress that this is not to say that every business is unethical. Instead, what it suggests is that capitalism, which by definition seeks to accumulate wealth for a few at the cost of others, regardless of the consequences, is the quite literally valueless economic creed that is now underpinning the process of genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza.

However, let's be honest about this. That same creed is also now seeing a large number of firms walk away from their commitments to deliver measures to control climate change, as well as their commitments to their staff, customers, suppliers, and the communities that host their actions regarding diversity, equality, and inclusion.

I always remember the first time that I heard a director of a major quoted company say in a private conversation with me and some others, who

included the then first permanent secretary for HM Revenue & Customs, that corporations were just a bundle of contracts. There was, he said, nothing more to it than that. I told him at the time that I disagreed with him, quite fundamentally. He seemed momentarily taken aback, but I am quite sure that I did not change his opinion. It was clear that this man (for a man it was), who was a pillar of the community, possessed not a shred of ethical conscience, although he could most definitely always make a case for the rights of the wealthy. I suspect he is now retired, and I am unsure whether the company he was a director of at the time, which remains a major company in the UK, is currently involved in Gaza, as that is not my primary concern. The fact is that the people who share his belief are those who are not just aiding and abetting, but actively facilitating genocide now. I sincerely hope that they will eventually pay a significant price for their crimes, because they need to do so. Nothing less will do.

Taking further action

If you want to write a letter to your MP on the issues raised in this blog post, there is a ChatGPT prompt to assist you in doing so, with full instructions, [**here**](#).