

IS THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN VIOLATING INTERNATIONAL LAW?

An investigative report into its partnerships with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

6th November 2024
Students for Palestine Bonn

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Demands for the University of Bonn to uphold its ethical responsibility and end complicity in violations of International Law

Students for Palestine Bonn, 6th November 2024

This call is released with a report that identifies partnerships and activities between the University of Bonn and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem that may breach international law to support its demands.

We, Students for Palestine Bonn, demand that the University of Bonn's administration upholds its commitment to respect international law and human rights, as well as fundamental rights. It is essential not only to maintain and respect these obligations, but also to ensure they extend to all partners and collaborators of UoB.

Israel violates the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has released multiple Advisory Opinions that determine that Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 1967 are unlawful.^{1 2}

It is well known that all Israeli Universities are a pillar sustaining this illegal occupation. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem is particularly complicit. The Hebrew University breaches international law on the prohibition of racial segregation and apartheid. Its Mount Scopus campus is partially located on expropriated Palestinian territory of East Jerusalem, and is designed to facilitate the expansion of Israeli settlements in the area to the detriment of the local Palestinian population.^{3 4}

A resolution of the United Nations General Assembly adopted in September 2024 demands that all States "take steps to ensure that their nationals, and companies and entities under their jurisdiction, [...] do not act in any way that would entail recognition or provide aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory".⁵

The university of Bonn has close ties with several Israeli universities, and in particular with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The Strategic University Partnership with the Hebrew university includes an annual €20,000 Collaborative Research Grant, and multiple academic exchanges in which students and staff have traveled, studied and lived in the illegally occupied territory, and in illegal settlements, sometimes with no previous forewarning.⁶

¹ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-205577/>

² <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/204176>

³ The original buildings of the Hebrew University are located in the area that was designated in 1948 as the "Demilitarized Zone", whose legal status is contested. The university has expanded its infrastructures significantly since the 1967 occupation, by building settlements into the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

⁴ Wind, M. (2024) Towers of ivory and steel: How Israeli universities deny Palestinian freedom. London: Verso.

⁵ A/ES-10/L.31/Rev.1

⁶ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/international/international-profile/partnerships-and-cooperations-worldwide/university-partnerships>

Given the ongoing violations of international law against the Palestinian people by the state of Israel, we demand for a thorough and transparent investigation of all UoB's partnerships with Israeli universities and institutions. Our key points are as follows:

- 1. Open case-by-case investigations on any partnerships and institutional cooperation with any institution and organization that may violate international law,** and with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in particular. Considering the current situation in Gaza and in the Palestinian territory, we demand that the UoB fully discloses its partnerships with Israeli organizations, and performs case-by-case investigations on whether these partnerships are in breach of international law. To maintain transparency and accountability, all partnerships and activities identified by the present report must be investigated and the results of the investigation should be made public. In particular, we demand that the investigation covers (non-exhaustive list):
 - i. active participation in the occupation and annexation of the Palestinian territory and UoB's possible participation in violations of international law, and war crimes against Palestinian, through its partnerships, research activities, academic exchanges and excursions;
 - ii. partnerships with institutions collaborating with the Israeli military and with the Israeli Defense Ministry on their activities violating international law;
 - iii. partnerships with Israeli universities upholding Israeli apartheid, violating Palestinian rights and international law, and committing racist discrimination against their Palestinian students, faculty and staff;
 - iv. partnerships with universities that support students who participated or are participating in Israel's war in Gaza, starting October 2023.

- 2. Suspend cooperation with all organizations and institutions that are violating international law.** In light of the precedent set by the University of Bonn itself⁷ who suspended all cooperation with Russian academic institutions following its invasion of Ukraine, we demand that the UoB remains consistent in its commitments to respect international law. Given the current situation in Gaza and in the Palestinian territory, currently being investigated for plausible genocide by the ICJ, we demand that cooperation and activities with Israeli universities and institutions, suspected of violating international law be suspended for the duration of the investigation. In particular, we draw attention to partnerships with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. All partnerships violating international law shall be frozen until the partners involved fully comply with international law. Following the example set by other European and international universities, we believe that UoB should also guarantee its commitment to respect international law and basic human rights for all people.

- 3. No war propaganda on campus!** We demand that the UoB strengthens and draws consequences from its Civil Clause, which secures academic freedom from military influences and guarantees the civil orientation of research. This demand includes the disclosure of all financial flows that the University of Bonn receives from the military-industrial complex and from public military institutions and the termination of partnerships that contradict the Civil Clause in natural science as well as in social research.

- 4. We demand a meeting with Rektor Prof. Dr. Dr. hc Michael Hoch and all relevant representative bodies in the university** to discuss the abovementioned demands.

⁷ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/news/044-2022>

About this report

The University of Bonn has many partnerships with universities in Israel and in other countries that may be violating international law. However, this report specifically compiles information publicly available about the institutional cooperation between the University of Bonn and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as well as publicly available evidence that the Hebrew University of Jerusalem violates international law. This focus was chosen by the authors because of the accumulation of compelling evidence that suggest that the University of Bonn is violating international law. We strongly urge the University of Bonn to investigate these ties, and all ties with partner universities and organizations that may violate international law, as suggested in our demands.

We now give a brief overview of this report. In Section 1, we recall the international law and expert opinions on the legal implications of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territory. In Section 2, we recall the precedent of the University of Bonn freezing cooperation with Russia in 2022 because of its illegal invasion of Ukraine. In Section 3, we describe how the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel is breaching international law, by actively (i) participating in the occupation of Palestine; (ii) actively supporting the current war Israel declared on Gaza⁸ and past military operations; (iii) actively engaged in military research and deeply tied to the Israeli military.

Finally, in Section 4, we present the academic cooperation and activities that the University of Bonn maintains with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and investigate how these might be breaching international law. In particular, we provide focus on archaeology field trips that may contribute to the occupation of the Palestinian territory and the destruction of Palestinian cultural heritage, and on academic exchanges and excursions in illegal settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. We argue that Uni Bonn might be directly violating international law through its activities in illegal settlements, and indirectly by whitewashing the malpractices of its academic partners.

⁸ Also sometimes called "Operation Iron Sword".

1 A reminder of international law and expert opinions on the legal implications of Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territory

The University of Bonn should take into account the body of international law and international expert opinions in its partnership strategies with other universities and institutions. This approach not only aligns with the university's commitment to international law and human rights but also upholds the integrity and ethical standards expected by its students and the global academic community.

Regarding partnerships with Israeli universities, we stress the importance of the findings and provisional measures of the two advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the current ICJ investigation on possible genocide, the UN Human Rights Council and UN Security Council and UN General Assembly resolutions, and testimonies from renowned NGOs both inside and outside of Germany. We provide here excerpts from some of the most relevant sources:

- ICJ's Advisory Opinion on the Wall (2004):

"In sum, the Court finds that, [...] The construction of such a wall accordingly constitutes breaches by Israel of various of its obligations under the applicable international humanitarian law and human rights instruments."⁹

- ICJ Advisory Opinion on Illegality of Occupation, Annexation, and Apartheid (2024):

"Israel has an obligation to put an end to those unlawful acts. In this respect, Israel must immediately cease all new settlement activity. Israel also has an obligation to repeal all legislation and measures creating or maintaining the unlawful situation, [...], as well as all measures aimed at modifying the demographic composition of any parts of the territory."¹⁰

- The UN General Assembly resolution A/ES-10/L.31/Rev.111 which demands to Israel comply with:

"Withdrawing all its military forces from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including its airspace and maritime space; ... ceasing immediately all new settlement activity, evacuating all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and dismantling the parts of the wall constructed by Israel that are situated in the Territory, and re- pealing all legislation and measures creating or maintaining the unlawful situation, including those which discriminate against the Palestinian people, as well as all measures aimed at modifying the demographic composition, character and status of any parts of the Territory."¹¹

⁹ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/131/1677.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-sum-01-00-en.pdf>

¹¹ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/n24/266/48/pdf/n2426648.pdf>

We also remind the position of the German Federal Foreign Office regarding illegal settlements in the Palestinian Territory:

“Like its partners in the European Union, the German Government regards the building of settlements in the Palestinian territory as illegal under international law and as a major obstacle to the possibility of a two-state solution to be negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians. It calls on those involved to refrain from taking any steps that would further hinder a two-state solution.”¹²

2 Precedent of Uni Bonn suspending cooperation with partners - the Russian case

On the 1st March 2022 the University of Bonn released a statement condemning the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops, and expressed its solidarity with the people in Ukraine. The university further announced it would suspend all cooperation with Russian partner institutions until further notice.

"[Rector Prof. Dr. Dr. Michael Hoch] said the University of Bonn has a sustained commitment to peace, openness to the world and international exchange, even beyond system boundaries. In solidarity with the universities and research institutions in Germany, the University of Bonn joins the voices from academia that *uni sono* condemn the Russian aggression. As a first measure, the University management has decided to "freeze" cooperation with universities and research institutions in Russia; financial transfers will be stopped until further notice and no new projects will be started."¹³

Given this precedent, we argue that it is the responsibility of Uni Bonn to extend this approach to all its activities and partnerships, to ensure it does not (inadvertently) violate international law and human rights. The partnerships of the University of Bonn with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem are of particular concern, given the ongoing violations of international law from Israel, as documented in section 1, and the violations by the university itself documented in this report. By referencing the Russian case, we argue that there is precedent for severing ties with foreign institutions out of ethical considerations, and that it is administratively, technically and financially feasible.

3 Possible violations of international law by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

¹² <https://www.auswaertiges- amt.de/en/newsroom/news/israel- west- bank/2264114>

¹³ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/news/044-2022>

"Without us there would be no industry [...] the Israeli knowledge industry relies almost entirely on public-funded infrastructure and investment, which is funded by taxes, such as the military technological units, primarily Unit 8200, the defense industries such as IMI and Rafael, academic research at universities and budgets of the Chief Scientist." - Prof. Isaiah Arkin, Vice president of Research and Development at Hebrew University.¹⁴

This section shows the deep connections that the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a strategic partner of the University of Bonn in Israel has with the illegal occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Israeli military, and the oppression of Palestinians in Israel and Palestine, and that many of these connections are in violation of international law.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ) is one of the six Academic Strategic Partners of the University of Bonn (UoB). HUJ has played a historical role in the oppression of Palestinians and their expulsion from their lands during the creation of Israel.¹⁵ HUJ's first campus was strategically laid on Mount Scopus in 1918 and opened in 1925. It was then expanded in West Jerusalem, by setting-up its Giv'at Ram campus on the ruins of the Palestinian village of Sheikh Badr, whose residents were expelled by the Haganah paramilitary in 1948. It also expanded into occupied East Jerusalem, resulting in repression of the Palestinian village of Issawiyeh.

The establishment of Hebrew University has served as a model for other universities in the country for territorial conquest and expansion of Israeli settlements across historic Palestine.¹⁶ HUJ has furthermore actively contributed to the expulsion of Palestinians out of their land during the creation of Israel. In 1948, HUJ played an important role in the actions of the Haganah Zionist militia by developing typhoid-dysentery bacteria as a biological weapon to poison Palestinian water sources in the context of the biological department at HEMED, the Science Corps.¹⁷

The historical contribution of the HUJ to the oppression of Palestinian is also cultural and intellectual. The National Library embedded at the Hebrew University still displays thousands of books and other items stolen from Palestinians during the war of 1948 into the early 1950s. In this instance 40.000 books were taken, 26.300 were burnt as they were deemed inappropriate and the rest were either kept or resold to Palestinian schools.¹⁸ Since the six- day war of 1967, when Israel invaded the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and until our present time, HUJ actively contributes to the illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territory through its infrastructures, research practices, education programs and close partnerships with the military-industrial complex. In this section, we highlight some of the most blatant examples of such violations.

¹⁴ Erez Raviv, "Vice president of research and development at Hebrew University: Without us there is no Mobileye," Davar, March 17, 2017, davar1.co.il.

¹⁵ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/international/international-profile/partnerships-and-cooperations-worldwide/regional-priorities-in-international-cooperation/regional-priorities-in-international-cooperation>

¹⁶ Maya Wind, "Towers of Ivory and Steel: how Israeli universities deny Palestinians freedom" Verso Books (2024).

¹⁷ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israels-chemical-arsenal-in-the-spotlight/>

¹⁸ Sofer and Finkel, The mitspim in the Galilee.

3.1 Active participation in the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territory

The Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is located in the illegally annexed Palestinian territory, more precisely in East Jerusalem.¹⁹ In 1918, HUI was established as a comprehensive university and center for the formation of a new collective Jewish-Zionist identity and nation. Founded at the apex of Mt. Scopus, it was also built as a strategic outpost for the Zionist movement to stake symbolic and political claim to Jerusalem. In 1948, upon the creation of Israel, the area where the campus is located was designated as a “Demilitarized Zone”, whose status is still contested today.

The Palestinian community most directly encroached upon by Hebrew University is the neighborhood of Al-Issawiyeh, located on the slopes of Mt. Scopus and right beneath the campus. Initially, Hebrew University and the Israeli government committed, in UN-facilitated negotiations, to allow Issawiyeh residents displaced during the war to return. Yet soon thereafter, Israel tried to limit the number of residents allowed to return. During the nineteen years of the enclave’s existence, Israel demonstrated its control with routine military “sovereignty patrols” on the Mt. Scopus campus and interfered in the lives of Issawiyeh residents using various alleged “security justifications”.

With Israel’s occupation and annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, Issawiyeh came entirely under Israeli rule. But Israel confiscated large proportions of Issawiyeh’s original lands, first to expand the Hebrew University, and later to build adjacent Jewish settlements. Since annexation, Israel has incrementally expropriated over 90 percent of Issawiyeh’s lands. Today, the neighborhood is encroached on all sides by the Hebrew University Campus, Hadassah Hospital, a Jewish settlement, major highways, and two military bases.

Over the last decade, student union chairpersons and leaders of student groups within HUI have demanded increased policing of the neighborhood. Some even deployed racial tropes to allege that Palestinian men pose a danger to Jewish-Israeli women as a basis to call for further segregation and for the university to build an additional separation wall between the campus and Issawiyeh.²⁰ The presence and activities of HUI furthermore stimulates the development of illegal settlements in the Palestinian territory, in part to provide housing to their students and employees, such as in the adjacent settlements of French Hill, Ramat Eshkol and Sheikh Jarrah. The expansion of the HUI into annexed Jerusalem includes part of the Maierdsdorf Dormitories, all of the Alan Bronfman Dormitories, the Students Village, the Lerner Family Indoor Sports Complex and the Gilbert Tennis Courts²¹ (See Figure 1).

¹⁹ The 2024 ICJ Advisory Opinion confirms it is an illegally annexed territory <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-sum-01-00-en.pdf>

²⁰ Tarabut-Hithabruth, “Everyday racism (3): Between Issawiyeh and the Hebrew University” [in Hebrew], November 12, 2009, tarabut.info

²¹ <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/11/23/statement-against-holding-esil-at-the-hebrew-university/>

These parts are settlements for they are used to house the population of an occupying power in an occupied territory. These parts are also used for the accommodation of international incoming students including Uni Bonn students (See Section 4.1). This infrastructure is also designed to favor Israeli settlements that have also been reportedly used by Uni Bonn Students (see Section 4.1). HUJ benefits from the settlement infrastructure, the transport lines, and the access roads, which are all in the occupied territory, some of which are on privately-owned Palestinian land. This infrastructure is also designed in a way to favor Israeli settlements in the area, and to the detriment of the local Palestinian population. HUJ' Mount Scopus campus thus plays an active role in Israel's settlement enterprise in East Jerusalem.²²

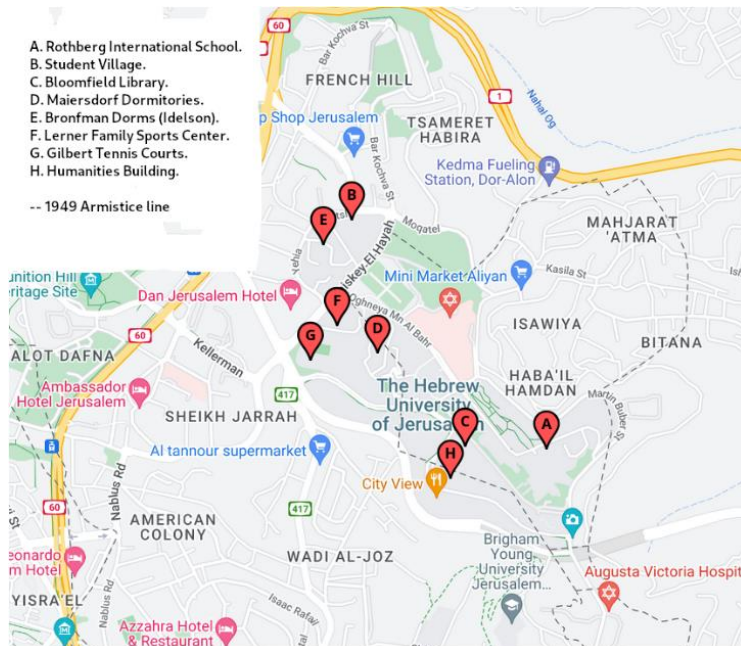


Figure 1 Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus Campus

3.2 Study programs jointly coordinated with the military that may contribute to war crimes and violations of international law

Contrarily to many countries, the Israeli military does not exclusively train its soldiers in dedicated facilities, but also outsources parts of soldiers' academic education to civil universities, who welcome student-soldiers and offer them tailored living and military training facilities on campus.²³ As Yishai Fraenkel, the vice president and director general of HUJ explained in an interview with the Washington Jewish Week in April 2024, there are three major programs done in collaboration with the Israeli military: Havatzalot, Tzameret and Talpiot (following quotations are from the article)²⁴.

²² Ibid. 21

²³ Ibid. 16

²⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20241005195802/https://www.washingtonjewishweek.com/from-m>

Havatzalot: More than a decade ago, the Military Intelligence Division established a program to recruit members of the Israel Defense Forces with the potential to excel as officers in the field of intelligence. The program has been at Hebrew University of Jerusalem 2019.

“Havatzalot is a three-year program that allows young students who are also cadets to complete a double-major bachelor’s degree with a combination of Middle-Eastern studies and one other science like mathematics, computer science, economics and sometimes philosophy, [...] They finish their training, and they serve basically as the backbone of Israeli intelligence.”

When Havatzalot program opened, HUJ designated space in one of its few campus dorms to create an official military compound. The military defines the compound as a “closed military base,” wherein soldiers are required to train and reside throughout the workweek as they would in other such bases.²⁵ The compound is demarcated by security guards and cameras and requires identification and military vetting for entry. Within this military compound, in designated floors of the campus dorms, Havatzalot soldiers train, study, and eat together separate from civilian students, but using university infrastructure and services.²⁶

Soldiers’ training in military and intelligence content takes place in the compound on the Hebrew University campus. Over the course of their degree, soldiers are methodically exposed to the Israeli intelligence community and are trained in its capabilities and research methods. Between their semesters, soldiers participate in the “Intelligence Summer” program, where they move between Military Intelligence Directorate units as well as the police, Shin Bet, and Mossad, and conduct a research project for one of the units.²⁷

Talpiot: This program is a leading training program for soldiers the military has identified as having “leadership potential”.

"When you think of Talpiot, think of it as training people who develop technologies like the Iron Dome. The Talpiot program is likely the most prestigious academic and military program in Israel, selecting exceptionally talented individuals from across Israel for training in science, technology and leadership. Talpiot takes those extremely bright scientific minds, those who excel in mathematics and physics so they can apply their talents to the development of military technology. [...] Many graduates of this program go on to have a successful military career and later make their way into civilian life as successful entrepreneurs. They’re idea generators."

edicine-to-high-tech-how-the-hebrew-university-of-jerusalem-unique-partnership-with-israel-defense-forces-is-bettering-the-world/

²⁵ Havatzalot, “Questions and answers” [in Hebrew], havatzalot.org

²⁶ Havatzalot, “Havatzalot compound” [in Hebrew], havatzalot.org

²⁷ Tomi Shtukman, “To be a ‘Havatzalon’: The desired path of the intelligence division” [in Hebrew], Arutz Sheva, November 24, 2019

Tzameret: This allows a student accepted on this program to serve in the IDF whilst studying for a medical degree.

"One of the main objectives of the program is to increase the number of career military physicians. The more highly trained doctors in the field, the better for anyone in need of critical care. The program is in its tenth year. As of the 2023-2024 academic year, the total number of new military physicians in training, including those that have already finished training, exceeds 850."

We also note that the Hebrew University has provided substantial scholarships to students engaged in the 2002 war against Gaza and other subsequent military aggressions. In particular, during the 2014 intervention against Gaza, the university provided financial assistance and some academic privileges to students who enlisted to contribute to war operations.²⁸ HUI now provide scholarships and course credit to soldiers returning from Gaza to their classrooms for the academic years 2023 and 2024²⁹.

These military programs also reveal the interference of the government (including the Israeli Ministry of Defense) and the army in the daily affairs of the Hebrew University. Notably, the increased presence of military on campus has been done at the expense of the safety and security of Israeli-Palestinian students and staff, who report having received insufficient protection and support from their university after instances of discrimination and intimidation on campus³⁰ (see Section 3.4).

3.3 Ties between the Hebrew University and Israeli intelligence services

Israel has three separate intelligence units: the Shin Bet (its internal intelligence service governed by the prime minister), the Intelligence Corps (its military intelligence service Israeli military), and Mossad (its foreign intelligence service, also governed by the prime minister).

Several faculties and departments at the Hebrew University of Israel actively train these intelligence services. We already mentioned in Section 3.1 and 3.2 the Middle East studies department, who play a particular role in training the Intelligence Corps soldiers notably through the Havatzalot program. The Intelligence Corps daily work is in direct violation of human rights according to international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention³¹, including routinely conditioning access for innocent Palestinians to (sometimes urgent) medical treatment against data.

²⁸ https://www.academia.edu/44781533/Una_partner_strategica_La_collaborazione_tra_le_universit%C3%A0_italiane_e_Israele [in Italian].

²⁹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-universities-step-up-to-support-students-in-reserves-war-effort/>

³⁰ Ibid. 16

³¹ Ran Yaron, "Holding Health to Ransom: GSS Interrogation and Extortion of Palestinian Patients at Erez Crossing," Physicians for Human Rights—Israel, August 2008, phr.org.il.

HUJ also maintains close and controversial ties with the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service. In 2018, Ilana Hammerman, published an opinion piece in Israeli newspaper Haaretz, after attending a Shin Bet recruitment event at HUJ³². In it the author described her observations and ethical concerns about the collaboration between the university and the Shin Bet:

"I was especially dismayed by what I did not see or hear, and what I have seen and heard all these years in military courts in Ofer and in the alleyways of Yatta and Hebron, from the methodical destruction of Palestinian society in the West Bank with temptations and threats and turning people against their siblings to the torture in the Shin Bet's interrogation facilities. I have documented all their methods by speaking to victims, I told myself, and here they are presented to me in the guise of a perfect public relations production sponsored by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. And no one protests, speaks out against or disrupts this detestable conference."

Training and cooperation with the Shin Bet and the Israeli National Police at HUJ, typically occurs through the criminology department, who promote in their papers "field-proven" strategies and technologies, that were actually "tested" on Palestinian populations³³.

3.4 Anti-Palestinian discrimination at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The HUJ promotes itself as aiming for diversity and inclusion in its campus:

"We endeavor to allow each student to feel welcome and protected, and to flourish academically, personally, and socially. We aspire to increase our potential to educate and enrich campus life through a plurality of life experiences, and perspectives.

A university that promotes diversity and inclusion is a university that fosters equality; that allows for each student to feel welcome and protected; and that creates the best setting for students to flourish academically, socially and personally.

A diverse university campus that offers a plurality of life experiences and perspectives, nurtures a heterogeneous community that reflects a broad range of world views, identities and cultures."³⁴

However, research on the issue has demonstrated that minorities in the university, and in particular Palestinian-Israelis, are frequently discriminated, and subject to violence on campus from students, security services, and the police, while HUJ does not offer sufficient protection against these acts:

³² <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2018-04-03/ty-article-opinion/.premium/what-i-saw-at-a-shin-bet-lecture-at-hebrew-university/0000017f-db1a-db22-a17f-ffbbedbb0000>

³³ Israeli Police, "Awarding of degrees to seventy graduates of the police academization track" [in Hebrew], July 4, 2023, gov.il; Ibid. 16.

³⁴ <https://en.diversity.huji.ac.il/vision>

- In a 2019 talk at Columbia University, Palestinian Prof. Shalhoub-Kervorkian shared insights, from her decades of research, about the daily violence that Palestinian families and children in occupied East Jerusalem endure at the hands of Israeli police and military forces. As a response to this the Minister of Education Naftali Bennet called for her firing and Hebrew University distanced itself from her, calling her research “personal opinions” that “do not represent or express the Hebrew University in any way.”³⁵
- At Hebrew University in 2014, a primarily Palestinian leftist student group organized a talk critical of the military draft of Druze Palestinian citizens. The university administration refused to grant a permit for the event, claiming it was unlawful to hold a lecture calling for civil disobedience.³⁶
- In 2014, students staged a peaceful protest against a new bill proposing to extend the draft to Christian Palestinians. The university administration deemed it “unlawful” and called the border police to disperse the event, during which they injured several students and detained others for questioning.³⁷ The dean of students later labeled such demonstrations harmful to the “delicate fabric of life at the university” and warned of a wholesale suspension of political activity on campus.³⁸
- In 2008 a Palestinian student refused to shake the hand of Israeli President Shimon Peres when the latter visited the Hebrew University library because of his involvement in the missile strike massacre in 1996 in Lebanon which killed several children. After this occurrence the student was detained for 3 hours, had his student ID confiscated and was later evicted from his dorm.³⁹

Furthermore, as seen in Section 3.2, the increased presence of military on campus has been done at the expense of the safety and security of Israeli-Palestinian students and staff, who report having received insufficient protection and support from their university after instances of discrimination and intimidation on campus⁴⁰:

- On March 28, 2022, two Palestinian students of Hebrew University were accused of having sang "nationalist" songs by off-duty police officers (who happened to also be students of

³⁵ “An Israeli lecturer in the USA: Israel conducts weapons tests—on Palestinian children” [in Hebrew], Mako, February 17, 2019, mako.co.il.

³⁶ Communist Party of Israel, “‘Hadash’ party student group at the Hebrew University: The administration is seriously harming freedom of expression” [in Hebrew], May 13, 2014, maki.org.

³⁷ Sapir Sluzker Amran, “Second day of the fight between Hebrew University students on the right to protest” [in Hebrew], Local Call, May 1, 2014.

³⁸ Yehuda Shavit, “Dean of Students office: Letter” [in Hebrew], Hebrew University of Jerusalem, May 4, 2014.

³⁹ <https://www.haaretz.com/2008-11-02/ty-article/arab-student-chair-apprehended-for-refusing-to-shake-peres-hand/0000017f-f105-d223-a97f-fddd204f0000> ; <https://mondoweiss.net/2008/11/do-you-have-a-right-to-refuse-to-shake-hands-with-the-president-yes/>

⁴⁰ Ibid. 16

the university), arrested and interrogated by the Israeli police “on suspicion of behavior that could violate the public peace” and were questioned about their political views and religious practices. They were ultimately released but were barred from campus for six days. The Hebrew University administration did not intervene in the arrest and banning of its Palestinian students, nor did it declare support for the students and affirm their right to free expression on its campus.⁴¹

- After the start of the military programs described in Section 3.2, there was a surge of militarization on the HUI campus. Palestinian students at the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies reported that their learning environment had been compromised by soldiers joining their classes. Palestinian students described feeling unable to speak freely in the presence of Intelligence Corps soldiers training to surveil their families and communities. They reported censoring themselves in the classroom and contended that the only department designed for the exploration of Middle Eastern history, languages, and cultures has now foreclosed this opportunity for its Palestinian students.⁴²

Given these close ties between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Israeli government, the military, police and intelligence services, as well as the repeated evidence of discrimination of (Israeli) Palestinian students and staff from HUI, we question the capacity of HUI to respect academic freedom and basic equality and inclusivity criteria, and their independence from the Israeli government, the military, the police and Israeli intelligence services. The activities and policies of HUI are also not aligned with the spirit of the Civil Clause of the University of Bonn. We estimate that these elements are sufficient to temporarily freeze, investigate and reconsider the Strategic Partnership between the University of Bonn and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

4 Uncovering the institutional cooperation between the University of Bonn with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The University of Bonn’s international strategy revolves around Regional Priorities in International cooperation. Uni Bonn focuses its efforts on specific regions and countries across the globe, Israel being one of them. The Rectorate explains on its website that the partnership with Israel is Uni Bonn’s commitment to Germany’s "Staatsräson" (Raison d’État) that conflates their moral historical duty (because of the Holocaust) towards Jewish people with a duty towards Israel.⁴³

"Maintaining relationships with Israel is important as a demonstration of the University of Bonn’s awareness of its particular responsibilities arising from Germany’s history. [...] The

⁴¹ Nir Hasson, “Policemen studying at Hebrew University arrested Palestinian students on the grounds that they were singing nationalist songs” [in Hebrew], Ha’aretz, March 28, 2022.

⁴² Ibid. 16

⁴³ <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/51786/israel-and-the-german-raison-detat>

University of Bonn consciously mirrors this political attitude through myriad close academic ties with Israeli colleagues."⁴⁴

Within the special partnership with Israel, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ) is a "Strategic Partner" of Uni Bonn. Their partnership dates back from 1995, and includes cooperation in research, teaching and administration. This tie has been strengthened by the "Strategic Partnership" program of the university in the last years (which includes six universities across the world):

"In 1995 the Universities of Bonn and the Hebrew University signed a research and teaching partnership agreement, which has led to a strong and now longstanding relationship from the top level down"⁴⁵

The University of Bonn maintains ties with other Institutions of Israeli academia; however, we focus exclusively in this report on those with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in particular through academic exchanges, field trips, and research projects (notably on archaeology). In this section we furthermore provide an analysis of how these partnerships and activities might be in violation of international law, referring back to Sections 1 and 3. We do not imply that each tie identified and presented is violating the law and should be severed, but we offer a basis to inform the reader, and for investigations on potential violations of human rights requested in our demands.

4.1 Academic exchanges and geography field trips in illegal settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank

Exchange programs: There are two main exchange programs for students and staff that Uni Bonn maintains with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: one in economics offered through the Erasmus + program for doctoral students⁴⁶, and an interdisciplinary Global Exchange Program offered at all levels of education⁴⁷. We argue that these exchange programs may be violating international law as the final reports of previous participants document how several of them were housed in housing located in illegal Israeli settlements on the Palestinian territory, and/or used segregated infrastructures built for the illegal settlements. These reports are publicly accessible online.

⁴⁴ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/international/international-profile/partnerships-and-cooperations-worldwide/regional-priorities-in-international-cooperation/regional-priorities-in-international-cooperation>

⁴⁵ https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/international/international-profile/partnerships-and-cooperations-worldwide/regional-priorities-in-international-cooperation/download/ubn_strategic-partnerships-and-regional-priorities-in-international-cooperation.pdf

⁴⁶ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/studying/study-and-internship-abroad/study-abroad/exchange-programs/erasmus-stay-outside-of-europe>

⁴⁷ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/de/studium/studium-und-praktikum-im-ausland/studium-im-ausland/partnerhochschulen/partnerhochschulen>

Section 3.1 already detailed how HUJ campus includes illegal settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territory. The HUJ offers accommodation to international incoming students including Uni Bonn students in the illegally occupied Palestinian territory. We draw attention to the Student Village which is a clear illegal settlement. For reference we have elaborated a map of part of Jerusalem (see Figure 2) in which one can see the different locations that are mentioned. The visible dashed line represents the 1949 Armistice line, to the right of the line is illegally annexed East Jerusalem and also marked is the 1949 demilitarized zone that contains part of the Mount Scopus campus. Out of the 6 students that went to HUJ, 3 of them reportedly slept in Student Village or at French Hill (also an illegal settlement either way). In particular in Student Village, as the report states:

“Ich habe einen Platz in der Student Village auf gem Mount Scopus bekommen. [...] Normalerweise scheinen dort alle Auslandsstudenten untergebracht zu sein (I got a place in the Student Village on Mount Scopus. [...] Normally all foreign students seem to be accommodated there).”

One of them did not know beforehand that they were going to stay in annexed land:

"Ich habe mich für ein Zimmer im Wohnheim auf dem French Hill entschieden - ohne mir vorher darüber bewusst zu sein, dass es sich dabei um einen israelischen Wohnheimkomplex im palästinensischen Ostjerusalem handelt (I chose a room in the French Hill dormitory - without knowing beforehand that it was an Israeli dormitory complex in Palestinian East Jerusalem)."

Another one of them was offered a place at the dorm but did not take it because of its high price, nevertheless they report:

"I spent the majority of my stay living in East Jerusalem"

One student mentions having chosen to live in the city and not in the campus. Another recommends the student dorms of HUJ and Airbnb (known to offer housing in illegal

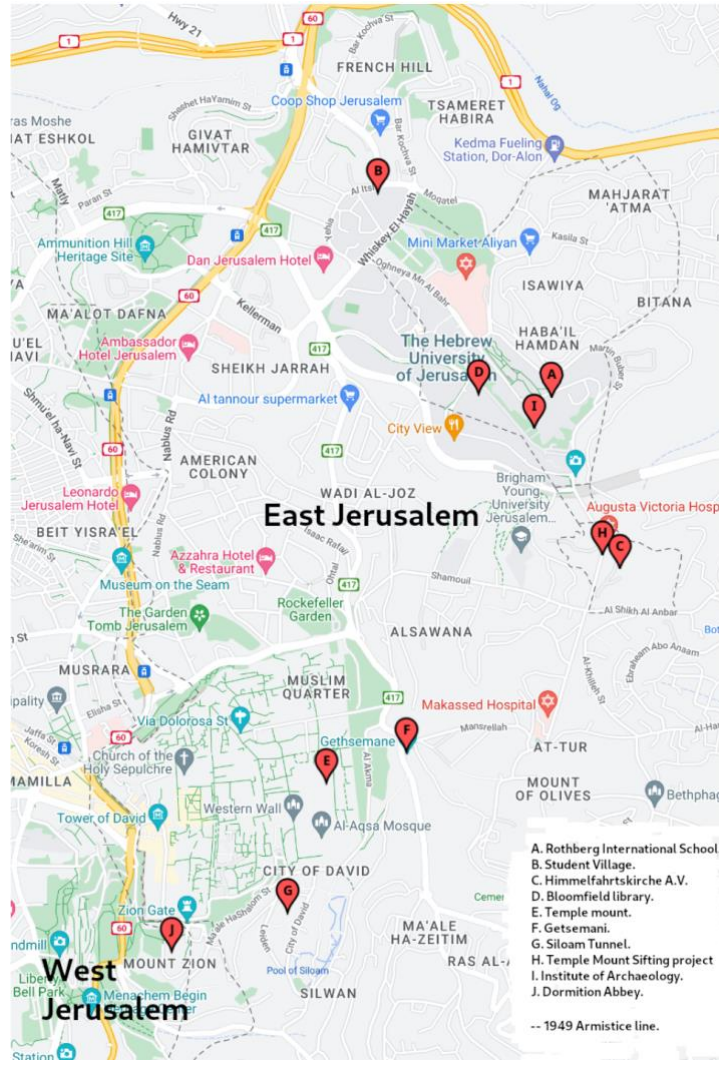


Figure 2 Part of Jerusalem and relevant locations mentioned by students. To the right of the 1949 armistice line is illegally annexed East Jerusalem

settlements⁴⁸). All HUJ statements confirm attending Rothberg International School and other facilities of the Mount Scopus campus such as Bloomfield library and the archaeology library, located in the archaeology institute⁴⁹.

Most of them give instructions on how to buy the public transport card and recommend the bus system. We deduce that they travelled places primarily using the public system built for settlements, since most of them recall using Arab buses specifically in the context of Shabbat when no Israeli buses were running. One of the testimonies who had to go to Safra Campus (West Jerusalem) everyday mentions the exact lines they used frequently Bus 68 and 42 which

⁴⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/12/airbnb-listing-company-is-deeply-compromised-by-israeli-settlement-properties-2/>

⁴⁹ <https://en.libraries.huji.ac.il/archaeology>

go over annexed land.⁵⁰ These are part of the infrastructure designed to favor Israeli settlements in detriment of the Palestinian population, as described in Section 3.1.

Some reports give an overview of places the students visited in illegally annexed East Jerusalem such as Temple Mount, Mount of olives, Getsemani, City of David, Siloam Tunnel, Church of Mary Magdalene, Western Wall, Ascension Augusta Victoria Church and Temple Mount Sifting (see these locations in Figure 2). Two students (one of which was doing his exchange at the university of Tel Aviv) mention visiting the illegally occupied Syrian Golan Heights⁵¹. In particular one mentions going to Mount Hermon which is between Syria and Lebanon, the southern slopes of which are located in illegally occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

Geography excursions: The Geography Institute of Uni Bonn (GIUB) organized several field trips that are in plausible violations of international law.

- The GIUB organized a trip to Israel and Palestine in 2019, for geography didactics students. There is a Facebook post documenting it in which features a map of the road trip taken (see Figure 3)⁵². This map not only clearly crosses through the Occupied West Bank (most likely going through Highway 1 which is only accessible to Israelis due to the Apartheid⁵³), but even shows a stop at the illegal settlement of Almog.⁵⁴ We note that this is only possible nowadays through the infrastructure of the illegal occupation of the West Bank.
- Another trip was organized in the GIUB more recently in 2023 (note: the trip happened before the 7th Oct 2023 massacre) called "of Borders, Identities and Resources".⁵⁵ The article features a picture of the group in the illegal Israeli settlement Kedar⁵⁶ in illegally annexed West Bank with a researcher from Hebrew University. We note that the webpage of the excursion indicates that the students were going to prepare a documentary film with Geo-medial, the movie production unit of the GIUB, but we have not found any trace of this movie being released. A previous one-week excursion had been organized by the same teacher in 2022, but we could not find more information about this specific trip.

⁵⁰ For the bus 42 <https://busroutes.info/egged-bus-route-42-mount-scopus-terminal-benyamin-mazar-to-main-entrance-hadasa-ein-kerem-and-viceversa-in-jerusalem-schedule-maps-frequecy-bus-stops-timetables/> and for the 68 https://www.bus.co.il/OtobusimMVC/Line_Places/1010/68_10038_0

⁵¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/29/what-is-the-golan-heights-and-who-controls-it>

⁵² <https://archive.is/PGh6m>

⁵³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highway_1_\(Israel%E2%80%93Palestine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highway_1_(Israel%E2%80%93Palestine))

⁵⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almog>

⁵⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20241006184326/https://www.geographie.uni-bonn.de/de/nachrichten/bericht-der-7-tages-exkursion-nach-israel-und-palaestina-von-grenzen-identitaeten-und-ressourcen>

⁵⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kedar_\(Israeli_settlement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kedar_(Israeli_settlement))



Figure 3 GIUB 2019 trip to Israel and Palestine itinerary

Recalling the ICJ Advisory Opinion of July 2024⁵⁷ and the UNGA A/ES-10/L.31/Rev.1⁵⁸ cited in Section 1, we conclude that the University of Bonn, by maintaining exchange partnerships with HUJ and research trips that rely on the use of illegally annexed land, is helping give recognition to, and assistance in maintaining, the annexation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank by the Israeli Government and Israeli settlers. This could constitute a breach of International Law regarding the Apartheid rule on Palestine and the privation of the internationally acknowledged right to self-determination of Palestinians.

Note: Field trips to illegal settlements can be justified in very specific cases such as research on illegal settlements, if the trip is absolutely necessary, that the research supports the rights of Palestinians according to international law, and that the research respects strict ethical guidelines. We do not believe that the field trips cited above meet these conditions, as they were directed

⁵⁷ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-sum-01-00-en.pdf>

⁵⁸ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/n24/266/48/pdf/n2426648.pdf>

towards bachelor or master students for educational purposes (i.e., similar education goals could have been achieved without a visit to illegal settlements).

4.2 Archaeological research and trips that violate international law

The History of Archaeology and the Israeli State has been one of theft, dispossession and colonial displacement. Uni Bonn has several collaboration projects on archaeology with Israeli universities, and in particular with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which might contribute to these crimes. In this section, we first give some context to the first claim and later we specify the connections with the latter claim.

Israeli archaeological theft and appropriation through occupation is a longstanding practice in Israel. It is also often publicly conducted, and Israel openly displays stolen artifacts in its own museums. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls seized from the Palestine Archaeological Museum.⁵⁹ The Palestine Archaeological Museum was founded in 1901 and moved to its current location in East Jerusalem in 1938. It housed thousands of artifacts uncovered by archaeological excavations or purchased up until 1948.⁶⁰ Among the museum's most significant artifacts were collections of scrolls discovered in the Qumran caves in the West Bank⁶¹, which were put on display beginning in 1960 and declared national heritage artifacts under the jurisdiction of the Jordanian government.

With Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, Israeli military forces invaded the museum. Soldiers used the Palestinian staff as human shields and looted many of the antiquities⁶². In violation of the Hague Convention⁶³, Israel transformed the Palestine Archaeological Museum into the current headquarters of the Israeli Department of Antiquities and renamed it the Rockefeller Museum.⁶⁴ The Israeli government, in collaboration with departments of archaeology from across Israeli universities, has continued to display and research the scrolls at the Israel Museum and to showcase and internationally circulate stolen artifacts.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Ibid. 16

⁶⁰ Hamdan Taha, "Jerusalem's Palestinian Archeological Museum," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 91 (2022): 59–78.

⁶¹ Israel Museum, "The Qumran Scroll at the Shrine of the Book," imj.org.il.

⁶² Ibid. 16; Gabriel Fahel, "Repatriating Palestinian Patrimony: An Overview of Palestinian Preparations for Negotiations on Archaeology," *Present Pasts* 2, no. 1 (August 15, 2010).

⁶³ David Keane and Valentina Azarov, "UNESCO, Palestine and Archaeology in Conflict," *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy* 41, no. 3 (Spring 2013): 309–44; Joanna Overdiran, *Plunder, Destruction and Despoliation: An Analysis of Israel's Violations of the International Law of Cultural Property in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip* (Ramallah: Al-Haq, 1997); Fahel, "Repatriating Palestinian Patrimony"; Hamdan Taha, "The Current State of Archaeology in Palestine," *Present Pasts* 2, no. 1 (2010), presentpasts.info.

⁶⁴ Taha, "Jerusalem's Palestinian Archeological Museum"; Valentina Azarova and Nidal Sliman, "Activating Palestine's UNESCO Membership," *Al-Shabaka*, October 23, 2013, al-shabaka.org; Beatrice St. Laurent, "Reconciling National and International Interests: The Rockefeller Museum and Its Collections," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 5, no. 1 (2017): 35–57.

⁶⁵ Joel Greenberg, "Museum Exhibit Becomes Front in Israeli-Palestinian Struggle," *Washington Post*, February 13, 2013.

Before continuing further, we recall that international law strictly regulates the use of archaeological research by occupying powers. Under the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property, Regulation 43 of the Annex to the Hague Convention, and UNESCO's guidelines, occupying powers are prohibited from carrying out their own routine excavations, and are instructed to support local authorities in preserving cultural treasures and sites.⁶⁶ Thus the transfer of occupied archeological sites their artifacts to Israeli control violates Palestinian rights to property and cultural rights under international law. Moreover, Israel has included some archaeological sites in the jurisdiction areas of settlements, thereby expropriating sites bearing historical, cultural, religious, and economic significance from Palestinians.⁶⁷

Israeli academic institutions, in particular the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUU) are in direct violation of the aforementioned international law.

- All Israeli universities, including HUU, collaborate with the Staff Officer of Archaeology to conduct archaeological excavations in Palestinian land, including on privately owned Palestinian lands, lending academic legitimacy to illegal seizure of antiquity sites and artifacts by the Israeli state.⁶⁸ All Israeli universities also conduct excavations in antiquity sites administered by Jewish settler organizations or settler regional councils.⁶⁹
- Joint military and archaeological surveys and mapping around the village of Susiya in the West Bank⁷⁰ have been conducted since the 60's by the Institute of Archaeology of Hebrew University. Since its the first excavation in 1971, the project has been expanded by the Israeli Antiquities Authority and Hebrew University Professors.⁷¹ In 2017 the Israeli military and Civil Administration issued demolition orders for the homes of Palestinians residents of Susiya. They continue to live under the permanent threat of demolition and expulsion.⁷² In parallel Jewish-Israeli settlers have expanded to the settlement of Susiya which sustains its revenue from the archaeological site.⁷³
- Most recently, between 2017 and 2019, Hebrew University archaeologists led an expedition in the Qumran caves and claimed the artifacts for their own research.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Hague Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (1907), Article 43 of its Annexed Regulations.

⁶⁷ Stahl, "Appropriating the Past.": Karma Nabulsi, Traditions of War: Occupation, Resistance, and the Law (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

⁶⁸ Ibid. 67

⁶⁹ Ibid. 16

⁷⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susya>

⁷¹ Emek Shaveh, "Susiya: The Displacement of Residents Following the Discovery of an Ancient Synagogue," September 12, 2016, emekshaveh.org; Ibid. 67

⁷² B'Tselem, "Khirbet Susiya: A Village Under Threat of Demolition," August 19, 2012, btselem.org; OCHA, "Susiya: A Community in Immediate Danger of Forced Transfer," June 2015, ochaopt.org.

⁷³ Susiya, "What we do on the site" [in Hebrew], atarsusya.co.il.

⁷⁴ Nir Hasson, "The good news: A hidden scroll was discovered in Qumran. The bad news: It is empty" [in Hebrew], Ha'aretz, February 8, 2017; Oren Gutfeld, "Bandits or monks? The mystery of the missing scrolls from cave 53/XII in

It is important to note that the Israeli archaeologists who conducting these digs are well aware of the illegality of their excavations. This has led some to obscure their names and details of their excavations, thus explicitly refusing to conduct transparent research. In one instance in 2019, an Israeli court accepted concealing the names of archaeologists violating international law. The grounds for concealment, which the court upheld, were expressly to protect them from the academic boycott and to shield Israel from further damage to its foreign relations.⁷⁵

Most international academic journals reject articles based on illegal excavations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), because of ethical standards, but Israeli academic journals do not uphold these international standards. The Israeli discipline of archaeology has thus built its own insulated scholarly ecosystem, in direct violation of international laws and regulations. They continue to this date to participate in excavations across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.⁷⁶

As we have shown previously most Israeli Universities with archaeology departments work violating international law and regulations. Instead of isolating these practices by refusing to collaborate with Israeli Universities until they reform their code of conduct in accordance with international law, the University of Bonn chooses to openly collaborate their archeology departments. We recall that the UNGA resolution A/ES-10/L.31/Rev.1 demands to Israel comply with “Repealing all legislation and measures creating or maintaining the unlawful situation[...] including all measures violating the historic status quo at the holy sites of Jerusalem”

- We documented in Section 4.1 that an Erasmus+ exchange program exists between the University of Bonn and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for students in Asian Studies and Islamic Archaeology. One doctoral student documented their stay at HUJ and stated in their final report:

“both of which [the Bloomfield Library of Humanities and the Archaeological Library at HUJ] contain many resources beneficial to my research”.

One cannot know what books they used of course, but what we do know is that these two libraries have so many resources and artifacts partly because of the plundering of Palestinian books, artifacts and resources, especially regarding Arab and Islamic topics.

- The Dr. Holger Aulepp Foundation Grants funds excavation excursions of students of Protestant Theology. Many of the excavations in Jerusalem related to Christianity (e.g., the City of David, the Temple Mount) are located in illegally annexed East Jerusalem and

the Qumran,” in *Desert Archaeology: Proceedings of the 16th South Conference* [in Hebrew], ed. Yael Abadi- Reis, Daniel Varga, and Gunnar Lehmann (Beer-Sheva: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2020), 71–80

⁷⁵ Nir Hasson, “Fearing an academic boycott, the Supreme Court forbade publishing information about archeological excavations in the West Bank” [in Hebrew], *Ha’aretz*, May 19, 2019; Haggai Matar, “Because of the boycott: A judge authorized the state to hide the identity of archaeologists digging in the territories” [in Hebrew], *Local Call*, November 21, 2016.

⁷⁶ Shezaf and Hasson, “Bar-Ilan University conducts an archaeological dig in the West Bank.”; *Ibid.* 16

have been illegally dug by Israeli universities including HUJ. Given their complete lack of respect for international law it is plausible that the students receiving this grant are visiting illegally dug archaeological sites⁷⁷.

- One of the courses offered as part of the exchange semester at HUJ is *Jerusalem: A Journey Through Time and Space, Historical and Geographical Perspectives, ID: 48170*.⁷⁸ It includes places that are in the occupied Palestinian territory according to the 1967 partition, effectively violating international law (the 2016 UNGA Resolution 2334).

We are here focusing specifically on cooperation between the University of Bonn and the HUJ's Archeology Department, but we have also found multiple partnerships with other universities and archeology institutions that may be violating international law.

These connections shed some light on relationship that the University of Bonn maintains with Israeli universities in the field of archaeology that violate international law and international standards for archeology practices. **We conclude that the University of Bonn's current international partnerships in archaeology may contribute to whitewashing the illegal malpractices of their Israeli counterparts, in particular the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. We call on the University of Bonn to freeze cooperation in this area until the involved institutions can ensure their code of conduct adheres to international law.**

4.3 Disclosing other partnerships potentially violating international law

PLANTFOODSEC: The faculty of Agriculture of the University of Bonn has links with Hebrew University of Jerusalem through small-scale grant projects.⁷⁹ We want to highlight project PLANTFOODSEC⁸⁰ (which ran between 2011 and 2016 and received a total funding of EUR 5 642 277,69), in partnership with The Agricultural Research Organization of Israel, which focuses on preventing agricultural bio-terrorism. Although this research program is presented as focusing on defense against agricultural bio-terrorism, we believe there is a risk of dual use of this research, especially since Israel has committed and still commits acts of bio-terrorism against Palestinian communities since its foundation in 1948.⁸¹ These acts of bio-terrorism include the systematic

⁷⁷ <https://www.etf.uni-bonn.de/en/faculty/dr-aulepp-stiftung> ; https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/international/international-profile/2025-internationalization-strategy/download/ubn_internationalisierungsstrategie-2025_evfak_en.pdf ; https://www.etf.uni-bonn.de/de/fakultaet/fakultaet_downloads/foerderrichtlinie-dr-holger-aulepp-stiftung.pdf

⁷⁸ <https://web.archive.org/web/20240818132025/https://overseas2.huji.ac.il/oslibrary/syllabi/2023-2024/UGAR2012.htm>

⁷⁹ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/international/international-profile/2025-internationalization-strategy/download/ubo-internationalisierungsstrategie-2025-lwfak-en.pdf>

⁸⁰ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/261752>

⁸¹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2022-10-14/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/documents>

destruction of Palestinian ecosystems and agricultural land, in particular the destruction of olive tree fields⁸², and the poisoning of Palestinian wells, water resources and land up until the 2000s to push the Indigenous populations to leave their land and prevent them from coming back⁸³.

Meanwhile, the Israeli government has issued no policy statement on biological arms control, and it has neither signed nor ratified the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).⁸⁴ **Given the precedents of Israel, and their absence of commitment to prevent the use of biological weapons, and knowing the close ties of Israeli universities with the government and the army, we assess that there is a substantial risk that research on this issue contributes directly or indirectly to violations of international law.**

The Collaborative Research Grant with HUJ: As part of the Strategic University Partnership with HUJ, an annual collaborative research grant offers funding for joint research projects with faculty from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem matching funds from both universities for a total of up to EUR 20,000 per project, since 2020.⁸⁵ Every year up to two applications are funded (each with two principal investigators: one from the University of Bonn and one from HUJ). Each application receives up to EUR 10,000 from their respective institution, for a total of up to EUR 20,000. The list of past projects funded is publicly available⁸⁶. From our review, these projects do not seem to consist of military research or to violate international law directly. However, we draw attention to the lack of clear and transparent selection criteria, guidelines and safety measures associated to the grants to ensure that international law is respected. Contacted on this issue, the administrators in charge of the program explained that each grant project is screened according to EU standards. But we also know that several EU research programs may violate international law, notably through dual research use by the military.⁸⁷ We do therefore not consider it a sufficient safeguard.

5 Conclusion

This report provides compelling evidence that the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is violating international law and participating in the Apartheid regime in Israel and Palestine. HUJ has several facilities on its campus that are illegal settlements in East Jerusalem.

-confirm-israelis-poisoned-arab-wells-in-1948/00000183-d2b2-d8cc-afc7-fefed64d0000

⁸² <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/28/world/a-palestinian-settler-duel-olive-trees-vs-bulldozers.html> ; <https://archive.nytimes.com/latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/13/the-plight-of-the-palestinian-olive-tree/> ; <https://visualizingpalestine.org/visual/olive-harvest/>

⁸³ Ibid. 16 ; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-06-23/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/israel-poisoned-palestinian-land-to-build-west-bank-settlement-in-1970s-documents-reveal/00000188-e8aa-df52-a79d-fcabdd200000> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2005/2/21/settlers-poison-palestinian-well>

⁸⁴ <https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/npr/83cohen.pdf>

⁸⁵ <https://international.huji.ac.il/news/hebrew-university-jerusalem-and-university-bonn-collaborative-research-grant-%E2%80%93>

⁸⁶ <https://www.uni-bonn.de/de/forschung-lehre/angebote-fuer-forschende-und-lehrende/forschungsfoerderung/universitaere-ausschreibungen/download/geofoerderte-crg-projekte-hebrew.pdf>

⁸⁷ <https://www.statewatch.org/news/2024/february/palestine-300-academics-call-for-halt-to-eu-research-funding-that-violates-international-law/>

The activities of HUJ also relies on and promotes the expansion of illegal settlement, including its archeological excavations. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem also has close partnerships with the Israeli government, military, police and intelligence agencies which compromise their independence and capacity to uphold academic freedom. These ties include support to these institutions, as they have recently been accused of war crimes in the context of the ongoing war in Gaza. Furthermore, the Hebrew University has a documented history of discrimination of (Israeli) Palestinian students and staff who uphold decolonial views and analyses that challenge the Apartheid policies and activities of the Israeli Government in Israel and Palestine.

The University of Bonn is a Strategic Academic Partner of HUJ, and over the last years has sent several students on academic exchange who have stayed in illegal settlements and on illegally occupied land (notably in East Jerusalem). The Geography Department of the University of Bonn (GIUB) has also organized several excursions for bachelor and master students that included stops in illegal settlements in the West Bank. The university of Bonn also collaborates with the archeology department of HUJ. Given the many illegal excavations and malpractices of HUJ in the Palestinian Occupied Territory, we estimate that there is a high risk that the University of Bonn is contributing to additional violations of international law.

We consider that the policies and practices of HUJ are in contradiction with the commitment of the University of Bonn to respect international law, academic freedom, independence diversity and inclusivity in its partnerships with foreign universities. The close ties of HUJ with the Israeli military furthermore do not align with the Civil Clause of the University of Bonn. For these reasons, we urge the University of Bonn to investigate their partnership with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and end any partnership that is in breach of international law or contradicts the values of the University of Bonn.