

Corporate Complicity

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In Spokesman 112, Dalit Baum discussed the settlement industry and corporate involvement in Israel's occupation of Palestine. Here, she focuses on the role of one multinational company, G4S, whose equipment is used as part of the illegal separation wall. This paper was originally presented to the London Session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, which took place at the Law Society in Chancery Lane in November 2010. In Autumn 2011, all the papers from that Session are to be published by Pluto Press under the title Corporate Complicity in Israel's Occupation, edited by Asa Winstanley and Frank Barat. This will coincide with the South Africa Session of the Tribunal, which will consider the question of Israel and Apartheid.

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In 2002, the Danish security company Group4Falck bought one of Israel's biggest providers of security services: Hashmira. In 2004, Group4Falck merged with the British Securicor company and established Group4Securicor (G4S), which is now one of the largest companies providing security services internationally.

G4S holds 90 per cent of the shares of its Israeli subsidiary, G4S Israel.¹ Our research has found that G4S Israel is involved in the Israeli occupation in four main ways: in providing security equipment and services to incarceration facilities holding Palestinian political prisoners inside Israel and in the occupied West Bank; in providing equipment and maintenance services to Israeli military checkpoints in the West Bank; in providing security

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systems for the Israeli police headquarters in the West Bank; and in providing security services to businesses in settlements.

Providing security systems and services to incarceration facilities for Palestinian political prisoners inside Israel and in the occupied West Bank

According to the company's own publications, G4S Israel has provided a perimeter defence system for the walls of Ofer Prison and installed a central command room in the facility, from which the entire facility can be monitored. The Ofer compound includes a prison, an army camp and a military court. This Israeli prison is specifically dedicated for Palestinian political prisoners. Despite being in the West Bank, the compound is located in what Israel defines as the 'Seam Zone'. Thus, access by West Bank Palestinians to this facility is highly restricted, both for family members of detainees and for their lawyers, and it is dependent on receiving a special access permit. The fact that the court is located in this facility severely limits the possibility of the public and, in particular, the Palestinian public from the West Bank, from attending court sessions.²

Additionally, the company reports that it has provided the entire security system for the Ketziot Prison and a central command room in the Megido Prison. These prisons are defined as prisons for 'security prisoners', which, in fact, means that they hold Palestinian political prisoners. In violation of international law, these prisoners are held in facilities inside Israel and not in the occupied territory.³ Palestinians are defined as 'security' prisoners not only when found guilty of committing militant acts, but also when they are associated with any felony of a political character, such as belonging to an unauthorized political organization, participating in demonstrations and the like. Prisoners in these prisons are deprived of many of the basic rights that other prisoners enjoy, such as access to a telephone, heavy limitations on reading materials, on receiving and sending letters, and on visiting rights of family members. Political prisoners are also more likely to undergo torture.⁴ In particular, in these two prisons, prisoners are only entitled to one visit per month by immediate family members.

It is also important to note that these are the three prisons in which Palestinian administrative detainees are held. Currently there are more than 200 such prisoners in these prisons. Administrative detainees are held without being charged with any crime or violation, and they are imprisoned for months and even years without a release or court date. The

incarceration of administrative detainees is in violation of any covenant of international human rights law.

Providing equipment and maintenance services to Israeli military checkpoints in the West Bank

G4S Israel supplied luggage scanning equipment and full body scanners to several military checkpoints in the West Bank, including the Qalandia checkpoint, the Bethlehem checkpoint and the Irtah (Sha'ar Efraim) checkpoint. Additionally, the company provided full body scanners to the Erez checkpoint in Gaza.

All of these West Bank checkpoints are built as part of the Separation Wall, whose route was declared illegal by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004. The Qalandia and Bethlehem checkpoints are also part of the Israeli system of control that sustains its annexation of East Jerusalem, since they prevent Palestinian residents of the West Bank from entering the city. The Erez checkpoint serves as part of the Israeli closure policy over the Gaza Strip. The Barcelona session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine defined the closure of the borders of the Gaza Strip as an act that may be characterized as Apartheid; the annexation of East Jerusalem was found to be one of the grave breaches of international law against the Palestinian people.

Providing security systems for the Israeli police headquarters in the West Bank

G4S Israel provided security equipment for the Israeli police headquarters in the West Bank, which is located in the E-1 area, next to the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim. The E-1 construction project was aimed at ensuring the contiguity of Israeli settlements between the settlement neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim, cutting off the south of the West Bank (Bethlehem and Hebron) from the central and northern areas (Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin) to Palestinian movement and development. Due to US objections, the construction of housing projects in the E-1 area was suspended, but a new building for the headquarters of the West Bank division of the Israeli police was built there. Currently this is the only Israeli building in this area.

Providing security services to businesses in settlements

According to company publications and findings of the group 'DanWatch', G4S offers its security services to businesses in the illegal settlements in the West Bank and in the settlement neighborhoods of East Jerusalem.

These include providing security equipment and personnel to shops and supermarkets in settlements, including in the settlements of Modi'in Illit, Ma'ale Adumim, Har Adar and the settlement neighborhoods of East Jerusalem.

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Notes

- 1 For more information about the company, see the company pages on our website: <http://www.whoprofits.org/Company%20Info.php?id=596> and [id=595](http://www.whoprofits.org/Company%20Info.php?id=595).
- 2 For a detailed report on the Israeli military court system and its implications on the rights of Palestinians see this report by the Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din: <http://www.yesh-din.org/site/images/BackyardProceedingsEng.pdf>
- 3 For an extensive overview from a legal perspective on the prisons for Palestinian political prisoners inside Israel see Michael Sfar, 'Devil's Island: Transfer of Palestinian Detainees to Prisons within Israel' in Abeer Baker and Anat Matar (eds), *Threat – Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israel*, London: Pluto Press, 2011.
- 4 Reports and publications about the torture of Palestinian prisoners in Israel are provided by the Public Committee against Torture in Israel, see: <http://www.stoptorture.org.il/en>



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to Trade Unionists
everywhere**

**No to ConDem cuts
Yes to peace and construction**

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General Secretary

Alex Gordon
President