



# Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign

*Building effective solidarity with the Palestinian people*

# Israeli military-grade surveillance in Glasgow



## **Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign**

was founded in September 2000 in response to Israel's brutality against the Palestinian uprising, *Intifada*, when Israel fired over one million bullets at Palestinians during the first week. Palestinians were resisting military occupation, dispossession and state-enforced racism, i.e. apartheid.

We invite you to join a local branch, become a member at large, or join a network in various parts of Scotland. SPSC is a wholly volunteer organisation; we have no paid employees and rely entirely on donations from supporters to finance our activities.

### **We stand for:**

- the right of all Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or the areas from which they were driven, in line with UN Resolution 194
- an end to the Zionist project of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians
- self-determination for Palestinians
- equal rights for Palestinians living in Israel
- an end to British arms trading with Israel

Israel enjoys elite political, economic, military and diplomatic support, but popular opinion across Scotland, the UK, Europe and most of the world is deeply hostile to Israeli crimes.



## **Israeli surveillance system in Glasgow**

Glasgow has been using an Israeli military-grade surveillance system since 2015, allowing Police Scotland to use facial recognition software to scan crowds and streets, trawling for individuals of interest and tracking them across the city.

The programme was UK-tested in Glasgow on individuals and groups involved in the popular Glasgow activity of making sure the statue of Wellington on Queen Street is always crowned with a traffic cone. This hardly inspires confidence in how the system is being used.

The system boasts a sinister “emotional recognition” software that can help to identify individuals of interest to Police Scotland. The system then rapidly links any individual to “multiple sources, including phone calls, mobile apps, emails, chat, social media, video, and transactions”.

## Who is behind NICE?

NICE was set up by veterans of Israeli military surveillance Unit 8200, which habitually hacked Palestinian communications for materials to use to blackmail individuals into becoming informants.

Knowing about someone's sexuality, or that a family member needed a life-saving operation, the Israeli authorities would demand someone become a collaborator to access scarce medical treatment, or to avoid being outed as gay in a conservative society under great stress.

So malign was this system that 43 Israeli veterans of Unit 8200 refused to serve any further in the Occupied Territories. One of them, Aviv Kochavi, revealed that:

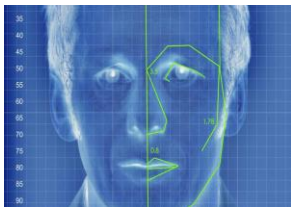
*“the main function of 8200 in the territories, is to control another nation. The intelligence that is gathered harms innocent people and is used for the purposes of political persecution and violating the privacy of Palestinians”.*

This Israeli system of hyper-surveillance uses the skills and technology developed to crush Palestinians striving for freedom. It should not be used in Glasgow.

## Glasgow should follow San Francisco

San Francisco has voted to ban police and other government agencies from using facial recognition technology. The councillor who promoted the policy said:

*“We can have security without being a security state. We can have good policing without being a police state.”*



There was no public debate in Glasgow before the sinister surveillance programme was installed, or even after it was revealed in 2018 that Police Scotland had bought Israeli Cellbrite hacking software and were illegally breaking into phones in Glasgow and Edinburgh without the owners knowing. That practice was stopped when it became public.

Civil rights body Liberty is supporting a case brought in Cardiff (May 2018) that alleges police use of facial recognition breaks human rights law.

London Police are fining pedestrians £90 who conceal their face while walking past a surveillance camera.

## Israeli surveillance is good for...

- blackmailing Palestinians under military occupation
- hacking into WhatsApp accounts worldwide
- hacking phones of human rights campaigners, e.g. Amnesty International staff
- tracking the phones of friends of Jamal Kashoggi - and possibly Kashoggi himself, his phone was never recovered - before he was intercepted by a Saudi hit squad, killed, dismembered, and probably dissolved in acid in Istanbul in October 2018.

Roei Elkabetz, a Brigadier General in the Israeli army, told a 2012 border surveillance and control technology conference in El Paso, Texas, “We have learned lots from Gaza. It’s a great laboratory”. Now Glasgow is being monitored by a surveillance system emerging out of what Amnesty calls “crimes against humanity”.



## **There's much blood on the product**

Israel's surveillance products are developed by being tested on Palestinians by the Israeli military and that experience in the field then fed back to the weapons and technology developers.

One Israeli senior executive told a Danish academic:

*"Once an order has been made by the Israeli military, and after initial deployment in the field, the company's technical departments are often contacted with demands for corrections and tweaks based on experience. Thus every time the military uses Israeli security technology, it automatically tests it. Companies benefit greatly from this and every time a new order is placed, this feedback from the battlefield is injected to improve the process of tendering and guarantee quality and effectiveness."*

Saar Koursh, CEO and a contender for President Donald Trump's surveillance infrastructure on the US-Mexico border, described Gaza as a "showroom" for the company's "smart fences" whose customers "appreciate that the products are battle-tested." Israel has found lucrative markets for the technology tested by oppressing the Palestinian people. Glasgow, for example.

## **Arms embargo against Israel**

During Israel's massacre of 2,200 Palestinians in 2014, the Scottish Government condemned the "deep inhumanity" of the Israel attack and called for an arms embargo. While Israeli snipers were killing hundreds of Palestinian demonstrators, Amnesty International added its voice to the call for an embargo, i.e. a two-way ban on trading arms.

Glasgow City Council should promote our rights by following San Francisco and banning police from using the sinister surveillance technology. We don't want to be tracked around the city without good reason - putting a traffic cone on a statue is not a good reason in the opinion of Glaswegians.

Israeli surveillance technology is a weapon developed for a war crime, and this alone is a compelling reason not to buy it. More generally, facial recognition technology is raising profound fears among many that it is part of a larger threat to our right to any private life.

The authorities can use this power with terrible consequences. The eruption of the far right to governments across Europe should impel us to action against this Israeli surveillance technology.



## Sleepwalking into a nightmare?

The UK Government sells sniper rifle parts to the Israeli military which are used in the commission of crimes against humanity. The Israeli software deployed in Glasgow was bought from Israel as part of joint UK-Israel efforts to defeat the rising worldwide BDS movement that works to pressure Israel to end its crimes against the Palestinian people.

Shamefully, Glasgow City Council jumped at an offer from David Cameron's Coalition Government to fund the surveillance project via the Technology Strategy Board, later renamed Innovate UK. This body is sponsored by the UK Government, and works to counter the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement by building trade links with Israel and, as with the NICE Glasgow contract, funding whole projects.



## **Snowden & hyper-surveillance**

The same year 43 soldiers resigned in revulsion at the blackmailing activities of Unit 8200, the NICE surveillance system that grew out of the experience of Unit 8200 was installed in Glasgow.

Also that year, Glasgow University students elected as Rector Edward Snowden, a fugitive from the USA who had exposed blanket surveillance

the US Government had denied it carries out on US citizens.

He also revealed that the surveillance carried out on

the UK population is much more intrusive than in the USA, The European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2018 that mass surveillance of UK private communications was illegal.

Developed to control and violate the Palestinian people, Israeli surveillance technology is spreading its sinister shadow across Glasgow.



# What next?

SPSC is committed to building support for the Palestinian call for **Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions** against the State of Israel until it ends its crimes against the Palestinian people. In Scotland, as around most of the world, we are strong and Israel is exceedingly weak.

By many accounts, the Israeli authorities are well aware of the strength of the BDS movement worldwide, which is why they are fighting back by trying to smear supporters of Palestine as antisemitic. We reject these smears with contempt. For SPSC, real antisemitism is a contemptible racism. Opposition to the pernicious ideology of Zionism and all its crimes is a duty for all anti-racists and decent people around the world.

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**Donate:** [www.scottishpsc.org.uk/donate](http://www.scottishpsc.org.uk/donate)

*A fully referenced version of this booklet can be accessed on our website: [www.scottishpsc.org.uk](http://www.scottishpsc.org.uk)*

# **Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign**

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Scottish PSC is an extension to the Palestinian struggle for freedom against Israel's programme of ethnic cleansing and genocide in Palestine. SPSC exists to channel public opposition to the Zionist settler-colonial project into an effective and dynamic Scottish component of the global campaign that sends a powerful message of solidarity with the Palestinian people and a warning to Israel that its crimes must end.



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