

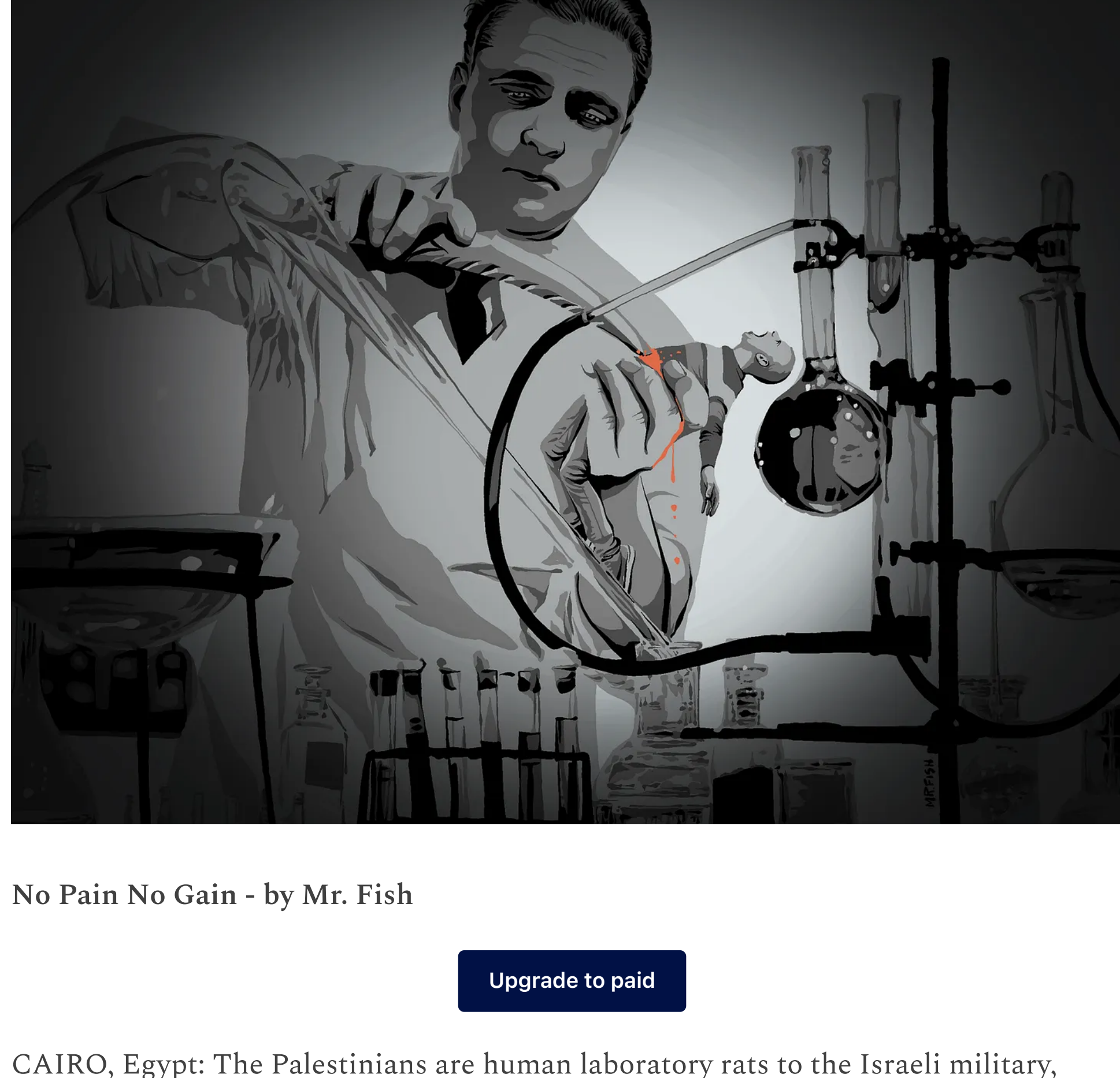
# Israel is Shutting Down its Human Laboratory in Gaza

Israel uses Palestinians imprisoned in Gaza as human guinea pigs for its weapons and technology industries.

CHRIS HEDGES  
18 NOV 2023

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CAIRO, Egypt: The Palestinians are human laboratory rats to the Israeli military, intelligence services and arms and technology industries. Israel's drones, surveillance technology — including spyware, facial recognition software and biometric gathering infrastructure — along with smart fences, experimental bombs and AI-controlled machine guns, are tried out on the captive population in Gaza, often with lethal results. These weapons and technologies are then certified as "battle tested" and sold around the world.

Israel is the 10th biggest arms dealer on the planet and sells its technology and weapons to an estimated 130 nations, including military dictatorships in Asia and Latin America. Israeli weapons sales totalled \$12.5 billion last year. Its close relationship with these military, internal security, surveillance, intelligence-gathering and law enforcement agencies, explains the fulsome support Israel's allies give to its genocidal campaign in Gaza. When Colombian President Gustavo Petro refused to condemn the Oct. 7 attack by Palestinian resistance groups as a "terrorist attack" and said "terrorism is killing innocent children in Palestine," Israel immediately halted all sales of defense and security equipment to Colombia. This global cabal, dedicated to permanent war and keeping its populations monitored and controlled, has hundreds of billions of dollars a year in sales. These technologies are cementing into place a supranational corporate totalitarianism, a world where populations are enslaved in ways that past totalitarian regimes could only imagine.

The genocidal assault on Gaza is another chapter in the century-long ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians by the Israeli settler colonial project. It is accompanied, as is true for all settler colonial projects, by the theft of natural resources, land, water and the natural gas in the Gaza Marine fields, 20 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza, which could contain up to 1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. In a world of diminishing resources, especially water in the Middle East, and the dislocations caused by the climate crisis, Gaza is the prelude to a frightening new world order. As democracies wither and die, as economic inequality expands, as poverty and desperation mounts, the global ruling class will increasingly do to us - once we become restive and attempt to rebel - what they are doing to the Palestinians.

It is not a far cry from Gaza to the camps and detention centers set up for migrants fleeing to Europe from Africa and the Middle East. It is not a far cry from the carpet bombing in Gaza to the endless wars in the Middle East and the global south. It is not a far cry from the anti-terrorism laws used to criminalize dissent in Israel to the anti-terrorism laws introduced in Europe and the U.S.

On Oct. 7, Palestinians in Gaza escaped from their laboratory cage. They went on a killing spree against their sadistic masters. Almost 12,000 Palestinians have been killed and some 30,000 wounded, including 4,700 children, since Oct. 7 in the hurricane of shells, bullets, bombs and missiles that are turning Gaza into a wasteland. Nearly 3,000 Palestinians are missing or buried under the rubble. Soon Palestinians will be convulsed by infectious diseases and starvation. Those who survive, if Israel succeeds in its ethnic cleansing, will become refugees, yet again, over the border in Egypt. There remain plenty of Palestinian test subjects in the West Bank. Gaza will be closed for business.

Israel, which is not a signatory of the Arms Trade Treaty, has long supplied some of the most heinous regimes on the planet with weaponry, including the apartheid government of South Africa and Myanmar. India is Israel's largest purchaser of military drones. Israel provided UAVs, missiles and mortars to Azerbaijan for its invasion and occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, which displaced 100,000 people, more than 80 percent of the enclave's ethnic Armenians. Israel sold napalm and weapons to the Salvadoran military, as well as the murderous regime of General José Efraín Ríos Montt in Guatemala, when I covered the wars in the 1980s in Central America. Israeli-made Uzi submachine guns were the weapons of choice for Central American death squads. Israel also sold weapons to the Bosnian Serbs, despite international sanctions, when I covered the war in Bosnia in the 1990s, a conflict that took the lives of 100,000 people.

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"Israel is a key player in the EU battle to both militarize its borders and deter new arrivals, a policy that hugely accelerated after the massive influx of migrants in 2015, principally due to the wars in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan," writes Anthony Loewenstein in "The Palestine Laboratory: How Israel Exports the Technology of Occupation Around the World." "The EU has partnered with leading Israeli defense companies to use its drones, and of course years of experience in Palestine is a key selling point."

"The similarities between the US-Mexico border and Israel's wall through the occupied territories are growing by the year," he writes. "One informs and inspires the other, with tech companies always looking for new ways to target and capture perceived enemies. The use of high-tech surveillance tools to monitor the border was backed by both Republicans and Democrats. One company during the Trump years, the billionaire Peter Theil-backed Brinc, tested the possibility of deploying armed drones that would taser migrants with a stun gun along the US-Mexico border."

Heron TP "Eitan" drones, manufactured by Israel Aerospace Industries - Israel's largest aerospace and defense company and the country's largest arms exporter - are used by Frontex, the European Union's external border and coastal agency, to monitor and deter migrant and refugee boats in the Mediterranean. The drones, which fly up to 40 hours continuously, can be modified to carry four Spike rockets with fragmentation sleeves of thousands of 3mm tungsten cubes that puncture metal and "cause tissue to be torn from flesh," in essence shredding the victim. They are routinely used on Palestinians.

"It's almost impossible to cross the Mediterranean [as a migrant]," Felix Weiss, of the German NGO Sea-Watch, told Loewenstein. "Frontex has become a militarized actor, its equipment coming from war zones," he added.

Elbit Systems, Israel's largest private weapons firm, supplies U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) with hi-tech surveillance towers which it uses along the border with Mexico. It also supplied the CBP with its Hermes drone in 2004 in order to test the feasibility of using UAVs on the border.

Pegasus, a phone-hacking tool produced by the Israeli NSO Group, a cyber intelligence agency, was used by Mexican drug cartels to target the journalist Griselda Triana, after her husband Javier Valdez Cárdenas, also an investigative reporter, was assassinated in 2017. The Mexican government is directly implicated in targeting journalists and civil society members with Pegasus spyware, according to research and analysis by Canada's Citizen Lab. After the reporter Jamal Khashoggi was killed and dismembered at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in Oct. 2018, it was discovered that an NSO client targeted the phone of his fiancé, Hanan Elatr. Pegasus transforms a cellular phone into a mobile surveillance device, with microphones and cameras activated without the user's knowledge.

Skunk water, a putrid smelling liquid, was tested and perfected on Palestinians, often with Israeli film crews recording the attacks to show potential clients the effectiveness of the chemical.

"Israeli forces routinely douse entire Palestinian neighborhoods in skunk water, deliberately spraying it into private homes, businesses, schools and funerals in what the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem calls 'a collective punitive measure' against Palestinian villages that engage in protest against Israel's colonial violence." The Electronic Intifada reported in 2015. That same year, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department purchased 14 canisters of skunk to use against protesters following demonstrations that erupted after the police killing of unarmed African American teenager, Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri.

Israel created a sophisticated facial recognition system, Red Wolf, to document every Palestinian in the occupied territories. The technology "is used extensively" to "consolidate existing practices of discriminatory policing, segregation, and curbing freedom of movement, violating Palestinians' basic rights," Amnesty International explains in its recent report titled "Automated Apartheid." The French investigative outlet Disclose revealed that French police have been unlawfully using facial recognition software provided by the Israeli tech firm BriefCam for eight years. BriefCam's technology allows users to "detect, track, extract, classify [and] catalog" people "appearing in video surveillance footage in real-time."

AI-machine guns, manufactured by the Israeli company SMARTSHOOTER, can fire stun grenades and sponge-tipped bullets as well as tear gas. They were perfected in trials on the Palestinians in the West Bank. SMARTSHOOTER was recently awarded a contract to supply the British Army with its SMASH "automatic targeting and firing system" which can be attached to small arms such as automatic rifles.

Israel, according to Jeff Halper in his book "War Against the People," has done cutting edge work on cyborg soldiers. It developed a radar system that sees through walls, he writes. As The Electronic Intifada explains, Israel's military-industrial complex has built "a tank named Cruelty, a 20-gram drone in the shape of a butterfly, a stealth 'wonder boat' called the Death Shark, a series of weapons named after insects or natural phenomena (bionic hornets, smart dust, dragonfly drones and smart dew robots), cybernetic insects, a 600-building 'urban warfare' training center nicknamed Chicago and a one-megaton bomb containing electromagnetic pulse capability."

Harper notes that during the occupation of Iraq, the U.S. military replicated the tactics used by Israel against the Palestinians. It constructed a security barrier around the Baghdad Green Zone, imposed closures on towns and villages, carried out targeted assassinations, copied Israeli torture techniques and used checkpoints and roadblocks to isolate towns and villages.

Israel trains and equips U.S. police forces, teaching aggressive tactics, backed up by heavy military hardware and vehicles, which were used in Ferguson and Atlanta during the police confrontations with activists who were protesting Cop City.

Halper calls this the "Palestinianization" of global conflicts.

"With so many Israeli companies involved in maintaining the infrastructure around the occupation, these firms found innovative ways to sell their services to the state, test the latest technology on the Palestinians, and then promote them around the world," Loewenstein explains. And while "the defense industries are increasingly in private hands," following decades of neoliberal privatization, "they continue to act as an extension of Israel's foreign policy agenda, supporting its goals and pro-occupation ideology."

The global ruling class will counter the destabilizing forces of inequality, curtailment of civil liberties, collapsing infrastructure, failing health systems and increasing shortages caused by an accelerating climate crisis, by branding all who resist as "human animals." This new world order began in Gaza. It ends at home.

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## 79 Comments

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S.L. · Writes S.L.'s Substack · Nov 18  
I want to cry. I want to accuse Chris of being an alarmist, a conspiracy theorist, a so-called journalist spouting science fiction nonsense.  
But I have followed Chris for too many years. If he's preaching it, it's most likely gospel truth. Besides, the fact that this scenario is right out of a sci-fi novel really only adds credibility. SciFi authors have gotten it right more often than not.

3 replies

Carolyn Krueger · Nov 18  
Every time Chris connects the dots, my thinking is changed forever. Now it would seem that it's not really "hate" we are fighting, (except amongst ourselves, distracted as we are from the real agenda), we are fighting the cold calculations of profit and loss, and control and domination by the few over the many. I guess I am late to this realization--so caught up in my moral outrage. Now what do we do about it all?

3 replies

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