

Algorithms of Death How AI Fuels Mass Killings in Gaza

From 7th of October 2023 to Early May 2025 52,000+ PALESTINIAN KILLED

25600+ Men killed

17,400+ Children killed



MAY 2025

Introduction

The Israeli occupation authorities' use of artificial intelligence (AI) as an instrument of surveillance, control, and militarized oppression against Palestinians significantly predates the full-scale assault on the Gaza Strip. Over the past decade, Israel's military and intelligence agencies have increasingly incorporated advanced AI technologies into operations aimed at monitoring, subjugating, and weaponizing Palestinian civilian life. The integration of AI into lethal weapons systems has contributed to widespread and ongoing human rights violations across the occupied territories.

In 2019, a target identification unit was established under the command of Unit 8200, the intelligence division of the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate. Comprising both regular and reserve soldiers, the unit was tasked primarily with operations in Gaza, marking a shift toward the increasing automation of military targeting processes.

The Israeli military's offensive on Gaza in May 2021 was a watershed moment in its integration of artificial intelligence into warfare. Israeli media at the time described it as the first large-scale use of Al in combat operations. However, the most extensive and destructive application of such technologies has occurred during the ongoing assault that began on October 7, 2023. Since then, Israeli forces have reportedly used Al systems to identify over 37,000 targets in Gaza– a figure that reflects a staggering escalation in automated targeting. The use of Al-powered systems, when combined with highly destructive conventional weaponry, has dramatically intensified the scale of devastation, contributing to catastrophic humanitarian consequences and raising urgent legal and ethical concerns.

This report investigates Israel's use of artificial intelligence in military operations, with a focus on the current war in Gaza. It examines the types of Al technologies deployed, explores the ways these systems have been instrumentalized in service of large-scale violence, identifies key actors and institutions supporting Israel's Al military infrastructure, and considers the implications of these practices under international humanitarian and criminal law. This report aims to illuminate the grim reality within *Sde Teiman* and highlight the violations endured by Palestinian detainees, in clear breach of international law.

Artificial Intelligence Systems Utilized in the Genocide

1.1 The "Gospel" System: Al-Driven Target Selection and Attack Authorization

One of the most prominent Al-driven technologies deployed by Israeli occupation forces during their military campaign in Gaza is the 'Gospel' targeting system. Designed to identify buildings deemed as legitimate targets, Gospel processes vast amounts of intelligence to semi-automatically generate actionable strike options. Human involvement is minimized, limited to a final verification step before targets are submitted to commanders for approval or rejection.¹

The system draws intelligence from diverse sources, including satellite imagery, drone footage, and social media activity. It operates through a technique known as "probabilistic inference," whereby patterns are identified across large datasets. Individuals or locations that resemble known combatant profiles may

¹ <u>https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/01/the-gospel-how-israel-uses-ai-to-select-bombing-targets</u>

be categorized as military targets, even without definitive proof. Thus, targeting decisions are often made based on probability rather than confirmed intelligence.

These potential targets are transmitted to military commanders via an Al-based application called "Pillar of Fire," installed directly on mobile devices. Within a period of 10 to 12 days, the system identifies roughly 200 targets. This process carries severe consequences: commanders are fully aware of the projected civilian toll prior to executing operations. Approving such strikes in full knowledge of their potential humanitarian impact reflects a deliberate and premeditated strategy, which strongly indicates genocidal intent.²



² https://www.npr.org/2023/12/14/1218643254/israel-is-using-an-ai-system-to-find-targets-in-gazaexperts-say-its-just-the-st

1.2 The "Lavender" Program: Algorithmic Targeting and Civilian Casualties

Another major AI system integral to Israel's military operations in Gaza is the "Lavender" program. Lavender uses machine learning algorithms to assign Gaza residents a "risk score," evaluating the likelihood that an individual is affiliated with an armed group. Based on this score–on a scale from 0 to 100–military officials set thresholds that determine whether an individual can be classified as a legitimate target.³

Lavender has led to tens of thousands of civilians being placed on strike lists based on algorithmic predictions. The system analyzes behavioral patterns derived from surveillance data–such as footage from drones and security cameras–and possibly information extracted from digital communications and social media platforms. If an individual's behavior matches the patterns associated with resistance fighters, they are flagged as potential combatants. However, the system's reliance on probabilistic models instead of verified intelligence introduces a significant margin of error, estimated at a minimum of 10%.⁴

Reports and admissions from within the Israeli military reveal that Lavender outputs were treated with near-absolute authority during the first weeks of the Gaza offensive, beginning on October 7, 2023. Soldiers were given broad

³ https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/

⁴ https://verfassungsblog.de/gaza-artificial-intelligence-and-kill-lists/

discretion to act on Al-generated targeting lists without independent human verification. This policy effectively disregarded fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, such as proportionality and distinction between civilians and combatants.



The widespread use of Lavender has directly contributed to mass civilian casualties, including the destruction of entire neighborhoods and erasure of entire families. Furthermore, concerns have emerged regarding the involvement of social media platforms, suggesting that surveillance data from these networks may have fed into the targeting algorithms, raising additional ethical and legal questions about complicity.

The deployment of Lavender technology illustrates a systematic reliance on artificial intelligence to execute lethal operations with minimal human oversight-transforming Gaza into a laboratory of automated warfare and mass civilian targeting.

Expansion of Al Warfare: New Technologies and Methods

2.1 "Where's Daddy?": AI Targeting Families at Home

The "Where's Daddy?" system represents a significant escalation in the Israeli military's use of artificial intelligence technologies. Unlike earlier programs such as "Gospel" and "Lavender," this technology specifically tracks individuals until they are at home with their families, increasing the likelihood of mass civilian casualties.⁵

The system operates by collecting and analyzing vast amounts of data, covering nearly 90% of Gaza's population. Using an algorithm that scores individuals from 1 to 100 based on probabilistic analysis, it identifies "targets" by assessing their perceived association with armed groups. The method of "association" in mass surveillance means that unarmed civilians can be wrongfully classified as threats, leading to fatal targeting errors.⁶

⁵ https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/10/questions-and-answers-israeli-militarys-use-digital-tools-gaza

⁶ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/5/israel ai

Data sources for "Where's Daddy?" include mobile phone location tracking, satellite and drone imagery, facial recognition technology via platforms like Google Photos, and social media surveillance through WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook (Meta platforms). Documented testimonies from Gaza civilians reveal that attacks often followed their use of these apps, confirming reports by Israeli authorities themselves about the indiscriminate application of AI technologies.

Operational flaws in the system have been reported, such as significant time lags between identifying a target and carrying out an attack. These flaws have led to situations where entire families were killed without striking the intended target.



Furthermore, decisions to place individuals under surveillance or attack lists were sometimes made by low-ranking officers, often using unguided, "dumb" bombs-further evidencing a policy of intentional and widespread targeting of civilians.

The deployment of this technology underscores the Israeli military's deliberate and premeditated intent to commit acts that constitute genocide under international law.

2.2 Artificial Intelligence as a Weapon of Mass Destruction

Beyond targeting individuals, the Israeli military has employed artificial intelligence to maximize civilian casualties and to systematically destroy urban infrastructure in Gaza. One prominent example is the use of the "Iron Sting" missile–a laser- and GPS-guided mortar shell developed by the Israeli company Elbit Systems–which was first deployed in Gaza in October 2023.⁷



Advanced drones, such as the TP Heron, Hermes 900, and Hermes 450, were also heavily utilized for surveillance, intelligence gathering, and precision strikes. Smaller drones, such as the Matrice 600 and Lanius, were outfitted with machine guns and missiles for direct attacks.

Among the most lethal tools was the "Quadcopter" drone, repurposed into a deadly machine capable of highly accurate surveillance, tracking, and targeted killings. Equipped with high-resolution cameras, eavesdropping devices, and explosives, these drones played a central role in urban warfare.⁸

⁷ https://defence-industry.eu/israel-iron-sting-guided-mortar-munition-debuts-on-the-battlefield/

⁸ <u>https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6357/Gaza:-Israeli-army-expands-its-use-of-quadcopters-to-kill-more-Palestinian-civilians</u>

Other Al-powered offensive systems include booby-trapped robots-vehicles loaded with barrels of explosives and remotely guided between civilian homes to cause maximum casualties-and surveillance cranes mounted with automatic machine guns. These cranes, elevated over 50 meters high, silently tracked and fired upon civilians, making the origin of attacks difficult to detect and increasing the sense of terror among the population.⁹



Artificial intelligence was also used extensively for biometric surveillance. Facial recognition programs collected and archived images of Gaza residents without their consent. These programs could identify individuals within seconds, based on vast databases compiled secretly by Israeli forces beginning in late 2023.

This comprehensive deployment of artificial intelligence technologies highlights a deliberate strategy: transforming Al into a multifaceted weapon of genocide. Not only were Al systems used to direct lethal force against civilians, but their effectiveness was bolstered by the complicity of various state and non-state actors, as will be explored in the next section of this report.

⁹ <u>https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/booby-trapped-robots-loaded-explosives-</u> israel-escalates-killing-and-destruction-northern-gaza-enar

Corporate and State Complicity in the Use of Artificial Intelligence during the Gaza Genocide

Israel's ongoing assault on Gaza has been heavily backed by foreign governments and private tech companies—especially in the realm of artificial intelligence (AI). Leading this support is the United States, whose close alliance with Israel has expanded in recent years to include cooperation in cybersecurity, data processing, and AI systems. This deepening partnership, further formalized in 2022, underscores Washington's long-standing role in enabling Israeli military operations—even as these technologies are used in ways widely condemned by human rights organizations.

The U.S. involvement goes beyond governmental collaboration. Tech giants like Google, Amazon, and Microsoft have provided critical digital infrastructure to the Israeli military. A key example is Project Nimbus, through which Google and Amazon deliver advanced cloud computing, facial recognition, and predictive analytics tools. These systems strengthen Israel's surveillance and targeting capabilities, including tools for behavior prediction and identity profiling that tighten control over Gaza's civilian population.¹⁰



Microsoft has supported similar efforts through its Azure cloud services, used by elite Israeli intelligence units such as Unit 8200, Unit 81, and the Air Force's Horizon Unit. These units rely on big data analysis and real-time translation software to process massive databases of potential targets. Reports suggest that Microsoft's cloud usage by the Israeli military rose by 60% in the first six months of the war on Gaza.

¹⁰ <u>https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/5/12/how-us-big-tech-supports-israels-ai-powered-genocide-and-apartheid</u>

Social media companies have also come under scrutiny. Meta–owner of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp–has been accused of providing data that may have been used to facilitate targeted attacks on civilians. Several survivors of Israeli airstrikes reported being active on these platforms just before attempted assassinations. These testimonies have been backed by human rights investigators.¹¹

Corporate involvement in the war has taken two forms: active support through technology, and the silencing of internal dissent. Employees at Google, Amazon, and Microsoft who opposed their companies' involvement in Israel's military operations have faced retaliation.¹² At Amazon, several staff resigned in protest over Project Nimbus. Microsoft fired two employees who disrupted a company event to object to its support for Israeli forces. Google terminated an engineer linked to the "No Tech for Apartheid" campaign after he interrupted an Israeli tech conference in New York. Others have resigned in protest over the company's role in Nimbus.

These patterns reveal a double layer of complicity: while these corporations provide tools that expand the Israeli military's reach, they also suppress voices within their ranks that question or resist that support. Together, these actions show how corporate power is being used to reinforce and shield a military campaign that many view as a grave violation of international law.

¹¹ <u>https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/12/21/metas-broken-promises/systemic-censorship-palestine-content-instagram-and</u>

¹² <u>https://afsc.org/gaza-genocide-companies</u>

Legal Ramifications of Al Use in Armed Conflict

The deployment of artificial intelligence in Israel's military operations raises serious legal concerns under international humanitarian and human rights law. Foremost among these is the erosion of the right to life. Semi-autonomous systems guided by AI make rapid decisions with life-or-death consequences, bypassing the ethical judgment and legal accountability that human actors might provide.

By automating warfare, such systems reduce human oversight and responsibility, effectively transforming lethal military actions into mechanized operations devoid of moral evaluation. This dehumanization of Palestinians–rendering them algorithmic data points rather than protected civilians–facilitates impunity in the event of unlawful killings.

Furthermore, Al-driven targeting undermines the principle of proportionality. These systems are incapable of making nuanced assessments regarding the military necessity of a strike relative to anticipated civilian harm. Errors that human judgment might have prevented become more frequent, heightening the risk of indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks.

Al also amplifies existing power imbalances in armed conflict. The use of unmanned technologies increases the physical and psychological distance between aggressor and target, enhancing the destructive potential of attacks and reinforcing the asymmetric nature of modern warfare. This dynamic is particularly alarming in the context of occupied Palestine, where civilians are subjected to increasingly sophisticated forms of technological domination.

The use of AI in this context may meet the threshold for genocide as defined by the 1948 Genocide Convention, in addition to constituting grave breaches of international humanitarian law.¹³ Although current international legal frameworks do not permit the prosecution of corporate entities under international criminal law, this does not exempt them from responsibility. Companies that knowingly provide the tools used in war crimes or crimes against humanity may be held accountable under emerging doctrines of international corporate responsibility.

¹³ https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4060409/files/A HRC 55 73-EN.pdf

Technologies such as facial recognition and sentiment analysis not only violate basic rights—such as privacy, freedom of expression, and non-discrimination but also run counter to the internal ethical codes of many of the companies involved. When sold to regimes with a history of grave human rights violations, such technologies become instruments of repression and extermination. The case of Google, whose involvement in Project Nimbus has sparked internal protests and resignations, is emblematic of this crisis of ethical accountability.

As highlighted above, the integration of artificial intelligence into military operations–while not involving weapons in the conventional sense–is still governed by the constraints of international humanitarian law. Although Alpowered digital technologies are not, in themselves, classified as weapons, their deployment in the context of armed conflict must nonetheless conform to legal standards. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reiterated that "any new military technology must be employed in accordance with applicable rules of international humanitarian law."¹⁴

However, the Israeli occupation forces have systematically failed to respect these legal obligations. A United Nations fact-finding committee confirmed Israel's violations during its recent military campaign in Gaza, particularly highlighting the use of Al-driven targeting systems with minimal human oversight.

¹⁴ <u>https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/international-humanitarian-law-making-and-new-military-technologies-920</u>

These methods were directly linked to extensive civilian casualties, including large numbers of women and children. The committee stated that Israel's reliance on Al-enhanced targeting, in conjunction with the use of high-impact explosives, "demonstrates a blatant disregard for the legal obligation to distinguish between combatants and civilians, and to adopt precautionary measures to avoid civilian harm."¹⁵

Conclusion

The Israeli military's use of artificial intelligence in its operations against Palestinians constitutes a serious breach of international law and a gross violation of fundamental human rights. These AI systems, developed to identify and strike targets with precision, have in practice served to intensify the scale and lethality of attacks on Gaza–leading to mass civilian deaths and the largescale destruction of homes, infrastructure, and public services. Such methods are not simply military strategies but components of an ongoing genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people, made increasingly sophisticated through the use of cutting-edge technology in service of systematic violence.

¹⁵ <u>https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/12/pattern-israeli-attacks-gaza-hospitals-raises-grave-concerns-report</u>

The events in Gaza underscore the profound risks posed by Al in modern warfare. These technologies reduce human beings to data points and targets, stripping them of their humanity and rendering lethal decisions based on potentially flawed algorithms and unverifiable intelligence.

The involvement of states and corporations in developing and supplying such tools raises serious legal and moral questions, particularly as evidence accumulates pointing to their complicity. This includes employee resignations, dismissals, and organized protests within major technology firms by staff who oppose their companies' contributions to war crimes and genocide.

In light of these grave developments, the international community bears a collective responsibility to ensure justice and accountability. Governments and international institutions must intensify efforts to hold all responsible parties—state and corporate alike—accountable for violations of international humanitarian law. Concrete actions are needed to pressure Israeli authorities to cease the use of Aldriven weapons systems against Palestinian civilians and to commit to international legal obligations. Additionally, there is a pressing need to enhance international accountability mechanisms. This includes empowering bodies such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court to investigate and prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Such efforts must form part of a broader strategy to uphold Palestinian rights, secure justice for victims, and support the Palestinian people's right to self-determination through sustained political, legal, and diplomatic engagement.

