

Ethical responsibility and its legal dimension. The 5th International Conference on Alternative Finance Research and the genocide in Palestine

Responsabilidad ética y su dimensión jurídica. La 5th International Conference on Alternative Finance Research y el genocidio en Palestina

A responsabilidade ética e a sua dimensão legal. A 5ª Conferência Internacional sobre Investigação em Finanças Alternativas e o genocídio na Palestina

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Abstract

On the occasion of the celebration, at the University of Malaga, of the 5th International Conference on Alternative Finance Research, from RedUMxPalestina, a node of the University Network for Palestine (RUxP), which integrates 50 public universities in Spain, we propose a reflection on the need to raise awareness and take action, as members of the university community, in relation to our ethical responsibility, and its corresponding legal dimension, in the normalization of collaboration with Israeli institutions and universities within the framework of academic activity.

Keywords: Complicity with genocide, capitalist economy, genocide, history, Palestine, human rights violations.

Resumen

Con motivo de la celebración, en la Universidad de Málaga, de la 5th International Conference on Alternative Finance Research, desde la RedUMxPalestina, nodo de la Red Universitaria por Palestina (RUxP), que integra a 50 universidades públicas en España, planteamos una reflexión sobre la necesidad de tomar conciencia y acción, como integrantes de la comunidad universitaria, con relación a nuestra responsabilidad ética, y su correspondiente dimensión jurídica, en la normalización de la colaboración con instituciones y universidades israelíes en el marco de la actividad académica.

Palabras clave: Complicidad con genocidio, economía capitalista, genocidio, historia, Palestina, violación de los derechos humanos.

Resumo

Por ocasião da realização da 5ª Conferência Internacional sobre Investigação em Finanças Alternativas, na Universidade de Málaga, a RedUMxPalestina, um núcleo da Rede Universitária para a Palestina (RUxP), que integra 50 universidades públicas de Espanha, propõe uma reflexão

sobre a necessidade de sensibilização e acção, enquanto membros da comunidade universitária, relativamente à nossa responsabilidade ética e à sua correspondente dimensão jurídica, na normalização da colaboração com as instituições e universidades israelitas no âmbito da actividade académica.

Palavras-chave: Cumplicidade com genocídio, economia capitalista, genocídio, história, Palestina, violações dos direitos humanos.

The applicable regulatory framework, together with international law, has since 2024 established a context of denunciation and rejection regarding genocidal actions and the occupation carried out by Israel. In this regard, the University of Málaga, in line with other Spanish universities and the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE), approved through its Governing Council (30 May 2024) the temporary suspension of agreements signed with Tel Aviv University, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev concerning transfer and outreach activities. In July 2024, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (United Nations, 2024a), followed by the subsequent United Nations resolution of September (United Nations, 2024b), declared the Israeli occupation of all Palestinian territories illegal, urging States to “not render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel’s illegal presence in the Territory” (point 4.c) and to suspend relations of cooperation.

Furthermore, all States were called upon, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to adopt measures ensuring that their nationals, companies and entities under their jurisdiction, as well as their public authorities, do not act in ways that imply recognition of the situation created by Israel’s illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, nor provide aid or assistance in maintaining that situation (point 5.a).

The latest report (Human Rights Council, 2026) presented by the United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Territories underscores the urgency of States doing everything within their power to halt the destruction of what remains of Palestine. This framework, while not exhaustive, allows us to question our conduct as public universities integrated within the Spanish State, institutions that are required to comply with the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, particularly with regard to the obligation “not to recognize Israel’s illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

The program of the 5th International Conference on Alternative Finance Research (2026), across its various formats¹, included up to three participants affiliated with Israeli universities/institutions:

– Peres Academic Center, a private institution that normalizes relations with the Palestinian people under an apartheid regime while avoiding any reference to the occupation (its participation appears in the final program).

¹ We do not know the motivations behind these changes, which ultimately “blur” the Israeli presence in Congress, although the collaboration with universities is evident.

– Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a public university financed with state funds and located in occupied territory. Its presence constitutes a de facto recognition of a situation deemed illegal under the relevant United Nations resolution (the participation was not included in the final program, but did appear in the preliminary program and is still reflected on the website of the UIA Crowdfunding Research Center (2026), within the list of panel participants). In this case, it must also be noted that the participant in question was the director of the Asper Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2026), a center financed by The Asper Foundation (2026), whose links to Zionism and Benjamin Netanyahu (Sarnier, 2018) are, at the very least, controversial.

– Tel Hai Academic College, located in the adjacent area of the Golan Heights, a territory illegally occupied by Israel, and likewise a public institution financed by the State. Although the institution itself no longer appears in the final program, the researcher affiliated with it still appeared in the preliminary version and is now listed among the reviewers, without mention of the university itself.

Since the establishment of the academic boycott (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, 2014) by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS, 2026), the parameters governing its implementation have made it explicitly clear that such actions are not directed against individuals. The issue is not discrimination on the basis of nationality, but rather an awareness that our silence, our negligence, our willingness to look the other way, may render us complicit in a blatant violation of international law.

All of us contribute to the construction of the university through our everyday actions, and through them we may either support occupation and genocide or express our rejection of them. This type of unreflective conduct, together with other actions grounded in deliberation and “justified” in terms of personal or collective costs -such as the signing of Horizon projects (García et al., 2026)² involving Israeli partners- ultimately sustains a complicit inertia, turning us into agents of normalization for a State that implements apartheid policies and carries out genocidal actions.

For this reason, and under the framework of international law, we question whether it is ethically acceptable to host an event of this nature without critically examining the collaboration of the University of Málaga, and of our departments, with Israeli entities located in illegally occupied territories, receiving public funding, and/or normalizing relations between Palestinians and Israelis while omitting the reality of the occupation, thereby contributing to a process of whitewashing the State of Israel.

Israeli universities (Wind, 2026)³ are not neutral spaces for the production of knowledge; they do not

² This recent article presents universities as spaces of public responsibility, in which social trust in research must be maintained by demonstrating commitments to human rights and international law on an operational level, and not merely a rhetorical one. The objective is to ensure that the university neither engages in implicit recognition of nor provides assistance to situations contrary to international law, and that it does everything within its power to help bring such situations to an end, in accordance with both legal and ethical standards.

³ As Maya Wind points out, Israeli universities function as pillars of the system of oppression: critical research and dissent are repressed within them, Palestinian students face discrimination, and their academic and research programs contribute directly to occupation and apartheid. From technological transfer to military-oriented training, as well as the flexibility granted within educational programs for reservists and active-duty soldiers, her work demonstrates the close connection between academia

operate in a vacuum. Rather, they constitute part of the ideological and scientific-technological infrastructure sustaining the occupation throughout Palestine and enabling the genocide in Gaza, in close collaboration with the Israeli military. The boycott is not directed against Israeli academics on the basis of nationality, but against academic institutions that contribute to the occupation and to the denial of the Palestinian people's fundamental rights.

Perhaps it is necessary to remember that every university in Gaza has been destroyed, and that university campuses in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are subjected to military attacks and to the deliberate suffocation of academic activity. Meanwhile, the University of Málaga has positioned itself as a hub for the study of alternative finance (University of Málaga, 2026), while overlooking the fact that among the more than thirty countries whose participation in the international conference the institution proudly highlighted was Israel, even as scholasticism and occupation continue their relentless course.

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and the military apparatus.

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