

Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa

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Media Release:

Renewed call for the government to cancel \$9 million military robot purchase from Israel

The Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa has renewed its call on the government to cancel the Ministry of Defence \$9 million purchase of military equipment from Israel.

The renewed call, in a letter to the Prime Minister, is in response to information revealed under the Official Information Act which shows the cost of the Israeli military robots is \$9 million and the procurement is to go ahead despite a government procurement guidelines rule (Rule 44 - "Reasons to exclude a supplier") indicating that the government may exclude a supplier on the basis of –

“human rights violations by the supplier or in the supplier’s supply chain”

New Zealand government concerns about the Israeli military invasion of Gaza in 2014 had led to New Zealand delaying signing the New Zealand-Israel Film Coproduction Agreement at the time, though the deal went ahead in 2016 anyway.

However, the Roboteam company, from which the arms purchase is to be made, is an integral part of the Israeli Defence Force with numerous contracts to provide military equipment for the illegal occupation of Palestinian land and the siege of Gaza.

The founders of Roboteam, Yossi Wolf and Elad Levy, both served as officers in the Israeli Air Force Special Forces before establishing Roboteam in 2009. They developed and supplied a robot to the IDF that was actively used in Operation Protective Edge, the sustained Israeli attack on the Gaza strip in 2014 involving numerous human rights abuses and war crimes committed against the civilian Palestinian population of Gaza. In these attacks 1,492 civilians were killed, 551 children and 299 women)

Recent [media reports](#) indicate Roboteam products to be purchased by the NZDF have been trialled by the Israeli Defence Force in its occupation of the West Bank and on the Gaza “border”. The tests were termed a “success”.

The IDF is renowned for its testing of military equipment on the civilian population of occupied Palestine. It is also renowned for its brutality – for example the murder and maiming of Palestinian children – 16 killed so far this year.

Should this purchase go ahead the government will implicate all New Zealanders in these war crimes.

Palestinian groups have repeatedly called for BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) against the Israeli regime which across the world is known as an apartheid state. New Zealand gave support to the struggle against apartheid South Africa through boycotts and we should do the same to help isolate apartheid Israel until it complies with its international legal obligations.

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