



Apple's Israeli Operations and the Case for Tech Divestment

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An ex-Apple employee and activist reveals that Apple operates a major R&D hub in Israel with over 2,000 engineers developing chips, cameras, and sensors, and details the company's ties to Israel's defense sector, making a case for tech divestment based on human rights concerns.

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This account examines Apple's substantial operations in Israel, including chip development for the iPhone 17e and the company's second-largest global research and development center in Herzliya. The speaker, an ex-Apple employee and activist, documents how Apple has grown its Israeli engineering workforce to over 2,000 staff members developing silicon technology, cameras, and sensors, while frequently acquiring Israeli startups to integrate their proprietary technology into Apple devices. The testimony also connects Apple's Israeli operations to the country's defense sector, citing examples such as the Alt Ventures fund—which includes a former Israeli military chief of staff as an advisor—planning manufacturing expansion in Ashkelon with explicit ties to defense authorities. The speaker argues that Apple's silence on human rights concerns in Palestine enables the company to avoid accountability, and contends that public awareness and divestment campaigns represent the primary levers for change.

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Apple's iPhone 17e contains a chip developed in Israel, and the company declined to respond to Al Jazeera's request for confirmation of its Israeli component development.

Apple's Herzliya facility is the company's second-largest research and development center globally, employing over 2,000 engineers who develop chips, cameras, and sensors.

Joni Serugi serves as Apple's Vice President of Hardware based in Israel, leading teams focused on silicon technology development.

Apple regularly acquires Israeli startups with proprietary technology and integrates their innovations into its products.

Israeli technology ventures linked to Apple's ecosystem have direct ties to Israel's defense sector, exemplified by Alt Ventures' stated aim to serve both 'defense authorities and the civil market.'

The whistleblower argues that Apple depends on public silence regarding human rights violations in Palestine to maintain its reputation and avoid accountability.

Public awareness and divestment campaigns are presented as the primary mechanisms to compel Apple to address its operational ties to Israel and associated human rights concerns.

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Apple's Chip Development in Israel

The Apple iPhone 17e has generated significant discussion in the tech industry following reports about its components. An article in the Jerusalem Post claimed that the device contains a chip developed in Israel. Al Jazeera requested that Apple confirm or deny whether the company has developed or manufactured components in Israel, but the Apple CEO has not responded to the inquiry. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has previously highlighted Israel's role in phone manufacturing, stating: "You have cell phones here? No? You're holding a piece of Israel right there."

Apple's Major Research and Development Hub

According to an ex-Apple employee and activist, the iPhone 17e chip is not the only component developed in Israel. Apple's second-largest research and development center globally is located in Herzliya, Israel. The company does not only conduct research and development for computer chips within Israel but also frequently acquires Israeli startups with proprietary technology that is then integrated into Apple's phones and devices. Joni Serugi serves as Apple's Vice President of Hardware based in Israel, leading teams of silicon technology engineers who develop Apple chips, cameras, and sensors. The operation has expanded significantly over more than a decade, growing from an initial small team to over 2,000 engineers. Current job postings on Apple's Herzliya vacancy page advertise engineering positions requiring expertise in pre- and post-silicon chip development.

Israeli Defense Industry and Tech Investment

Israel's technology sector extends beyond research partnerships with major companies like Apple. The Canadian-Israeli funding firm Alt Ventures announced plans

to build a manufacturing plant in Ashkelon. Among the firm's advisors is Aviv Kohavi, a former Israeli military chief of staff. In describing the venture's aims, the company stated: "We're going to build a structure, a formula that's going to be a win-win situation for the defense authorities and the civil market at the same time."

The Case for Divestment

Tareq, a whistleblower with insider knowledge of Apple's operations, believes that publicly speaking about the company's Israeli ties creates significant momentum for divestment efforts. He argues that Apple relies on public silence regarding human rights violations in Palestine and that the company believes it can avoid accountability by maintaining this silence. According to Tareq: "As long as people continue to actually fight for the morals that Apple claims that they have, we will absolutely win this fight, and we will show the world what it's like to actually truly stand up for humanity."

#Apple operations in Israel

#Tech industry divestment

#Israeli defense sector partnerships

#Corporate accountability and human rights

#Technology manufacturing and development

#Palestine and corporate complicity