

# STUDENTS' UNION REFERENDUM

# YES CAMPAIGN



LEICESTER  
STUDENTS'  
union



An independent fact checker has confirmed that they have read through all the documents and reviewed the citations provided by both campaigns. In addition, they have completed external research and review of the information provided to verify the information in both campaign material and the citations given.



## 250-Word Summary of 'Yes' Campaign:

- The University of Leicester has 6 direct partners or subsidiary partnerships with weaponry companies as follows: Rolls Royce, Airbus, Thales, Leonardo, AWS (1)
- Rolls Royce is a known F-35 producer and member of the US F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Programme. These F-35s have been used by the Israeli Defence Forces in Gaza and the occupied West Bank to kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people in what several major human rights organisations have described as a genocide (2)
- Airbus is heavily invested in the space and defence sectors and the UK government has confirmed that missiles manufactured by AirBus and MBDA (partly owned by Airbus) were used by Saudi Arabia in their attacks on Yemen. Airbus Defence and Space have also supplied military craft to the UAE Airforce, who are funnelling arms to militias within Sudan that have killed hundreds of thousands of people (3)
- The University of Leicester has a joint PhD research partnership through Digital Metal CDT which has received over £20 million in funding from companies that profit from the killing of innocent people, which include: Rolls-Royce, GKN Aerospace, AWE, QinetiQ and HVM Catapult (4)
- The careers and employability service routinely invites arms companies and other war profiteers onto campus to advertise to students, including the British military that participated in the widely condemned invasion of Iraq and in recent years has gathered intelligence for the IDF using RAF planes to fly over Gaza. As well as other huge arms manufacturers BAE Systems and MBDA.

## Reference List

1. Research and enterprise partners [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2026 Jan 14]. Available from: <https://www.space-park.co.uk/partners/>
2. [Internet]. [cited 2026 Jan 14]. Available from: <https://palestinecampaign.org/psc-company/rolls-royce/>
3. CAAT - Airbus Group (EADS) [Internet]. [cited 2026 Jan 14]. Available from: <https://caat.org.uk/data/companies/airbus-group-eads/>
4. [Internet]. [cited 2026 Jan 14]. Available from: <https://digitalmetal-cdt.ac.uk/>

## **Space Park Leicester**

Space Park Leicester is a university operated building designed for Physics research. On their website, they list many companies as business and enterprise partnerships that are involved in the production of weaponry that has been used around the world to kill innocent people, facilitate genocides and manufacture humanitarian disasters.

The following weaponry companies either are direct partners with the University of Leicester or have a subsidiary partnership: Rolls Royce, Airbus, Thales, Leonardo, AWS.

At the least one of these companies (Rolls Royce) holds an office in Space Park Leicester which is a University owned building.

## **Digital Metal CDT PhD partnerships**

This joint research partnership looks to investigate different materials focusing particularly on different metals. This research has direct application in the manufacture of weaponry and is funded by several arms companies facilitating ongoing genocides. This project has received over £20 million in funding from companies that profit from the killing of innocent people.

The defence companies involved include: Rolls-Royce, GKN Aerospace, AWE, Qinetiq, HVM Catapult. Additionally the company Siemens is involved which has been a target of the BDS campaign due to its links to human rights violations in the apartheid system that Israel subjects Palestinians to.

## **Careers and Employability Service**

The careers and employability service routinely invites arms companies and other war profiteers onto campus to advertise to students, creating a pipeline from graduation to participation in killing.

This includes the British military that participated in the widely condemned, neo-colonial invasion of Iraq and in recent years has gathered intelligence for the IDF using RAF planes to fly over Gaza. It also includes MBDA, who featured in a careers fair last year displaying the different components of a missile. Arms manufacturers BAE Systems, and Jaguar Land Rover were also present at the same event.

## **Rolls Royce**

The University of Leicester has strong links to weapons manufacturer Rolls Royce in a number of ways. For one they are listed as a “Research and Enterprise Partner”<sup>1</sup> of Space Park Leicester, which involves holding an office space in this university owned building<sup>2</sup>. This implies that Rolls Royce is routinely involved in research projects with the University of Leicester in the field of Physics.

Rolls Royce is a producer of military aircraft engines, naval engines, power supplies for military vehicles, and cores for nuclear submarines.<sup>3</sup> They have provided parts for aircraft that were central to Saudi Arabia’s devastating attacks on Yemen that killed thousands and created a humanitarian disaster. In 2019, Amnesty International singled out Rolls-Royce among other companies for criticism of its human rights due diligence policies in light of the Saudi-led coalition’s campaign in Yemen. Rolls Royce plan to “quadruple profits” by 2027 by exploiting genocide and war in the Middle East which inevitably means the mass death of innocent people.

Rolls Royce is also a known F-35 producer and member of the US F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Programme.<sup>4</sup> These F-35s have been used by the Israeli Defence Forces in Gaza and the

occupied West Bank to kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people in what several major human rights organisations have described as a genocide.

Rolls Royce holds an office in the UAE and on their website claim that they have been powering “defence” in the Middle East for over 60 years.<sup>2</sup>

### **Airbus**

Airbus is another company listed on Space Park Leicester’s website as a partner to the University and is heavily invested in the space sector as well as defence. It is routinely promoted to physics and engineering students as an excellent post graduate employer. Much of the space research carried out by the University of Leicester Physics department involves using spacecraft in part manufactured by Airbus.

The UK government has confirmed that missiles manufactured by Airbus and MBDA (partly owned by Airbus) were used by Saudi Arabia in their attacks on Yemen. Additionally, a report published by Justice for Myanmar alleges that Airbus helped to manufacture aircraft, with the help of Leonardo, that were used to carry out crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Airbus Defence and Space have supplied military craft to the UAE Air Force, who are funneling arms to militias within Sudan that have killed hundreds of thousands of people

### **Leonardo**

Leonardo is another company partnered with Space Park Leicester that is promoted to STEM students. Since 2021, Leonardo has had 8 military exports to Israel and is a known producer of F-35’s. Leonardo has a branch in Abu Dhabi and claims to work with “the UAE government, Armed Forces and partners.”

### **Thales**

Thales routinely supplies parts to Elbit Systems for manufacturing drones that have killed thousands in Gaza. Thales holds a joint venture with Elbit Systems, UAV technologies, which manufactures drones used in Gaza. UAV technologies holds a branch in Leicester. Thales has had military export licenses to Israel since 2021.

### **References**

1.Research and Enterprise Partners - Space Park Leicester

2. Photographic evidence available 3.CAAT - Rolls-Royce 4.Rolls Royce - Palestine Solidarity Campaign

All other references are these pages but not organised: Thales info- CAAT - Israel’s arms industry & its links with the UK

Military exports / F-35 info - CAAT - MAPPED: The UK companies arming Israel, including producers for the F-35 combat aircraft

Airbus info - CAAT - Airbus Group (EADS)



## **The UAE's alleged involvement in war crimes in Sudan:**

Since the outbreak of Sudan's civil war in April 2023, United Nations experts have repeatedly said there are "reasonable grounds" to believe both the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) are systematically committing war crimes and crimes against humanity, especially the RSF. Documented violations include deliberate killing of civilians, ethnically targeted massacres of the Massalit in West Darfur, widespread rape and sexual violence, forced displacement of tens of thousands, looting of homes and businesses, and attacks on hospitals, schools and refugee camps. Human Rights Watch also have recorded RSF fighters executing unarmed men, gang-raping women and girls, and razing entire villages, using artillery and air-dropped bombs against civilian populations. The advanced Chinese-manufactured GB50A guided bombs and 155 mm AH-4 howitzers identified in Sudan were traced to re-export by the United Arab Emirates in breach of the UN arms embargo. Linked UN expert reports further allege covert UAE arms transfers through neighbouring states and financing networks that sustain RSF operations. Sudan brought a genocide case against the UAE to the International Court of Justice in 2025, but the Court dismissed it on jurisdictional grounds, without assessing the evidence. While the UAE denies arming the RSF, the weapon tracing, human-rights investigations, and UN reporting together form strong evidence of its indirect role in mass killings, sexual violence and forced displacement.

## **Israel's alleged involvement in war crimes in Palestine:**

What we are witnessing in Gaza today is far worse than what the Israeli media portrays. This is not merely a war or an act of 'self-defence' against Hamas, it is a harrowing exhibition of human cruelty and a moral catastrophe that history must refuse to forget. On the 16th of September 2025, Israel was called by the UN independent commission of inquiry to fulfil their legal obligations under international law and end the genocide and punish those for their contribution to the crimes, to which they have failed miserably to do. Instead, numerous international bodies, human rights organisations and legal experts report the continued egregious war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocidal activity perpetrated by Israel and its military campaign in Gaza since October 7th, 2023. The act of genocide itself is categorised by two fundamental features: actus reus (act) and dolus specialis (genocidal intent). Israel is recorded to have committed four of the five genocidal acts defined 1948 convention of the prevention and punishment of a genocide. Since this very date, Israeli soldiers (IDF) have killed and caused serious bodily and mental harm to an unprecedented number of Palestinians, imposed a total siege, blocked humanitarian aid which in turn created a severe famine and systematically destroyed the healthcare and education system in Gaza, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of Palestinians. This brief description does not begin to encapsulate the scale of atrocities committed by Israeli soldiers, under the Netanyahu government.

