

How energy fuels colonisation and genocide in Palestine

Friends of the Earth France - September 2025

PART 1 – The fossil fuel business, a key asset for the Israeli colonial and military apparatus

As the horrors of the genocide in Palestine continue to unfold, Friends of the Earth France have pinpointed a key cog in the Israeli war machine: energy. This multifaceted tool of oppression could become a crucial target in the fight for the liberation of Palestine.

The situation in the Palestinian territories, which have been occupied by Israel since 1967, shifted into a new phase with the military offensive against the Gaza strip following the attacks of 7 October 2023. This genocidal onslaught has led to a humanitarian catastrophe responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people, including thousands of children, and has caused widespread famine, systematic destruction of living conditions, homes, hospitals and vital infrastructure, and large-scale forced displacement of the population¹.

The highest international judicial bodies took a stance on the situation in 2024, using terms applicable to the most serious of crimes and emphasising the risk of genocide. This analysis was backed up by the conclusions of UN-mandated experts, who confirmed that genocide is occurring, as well as reports provided by several NGOs².

Friends of the Earth France works alongside PENGON (Friends of the Earth Palestine) in their fight for the rights of the Palestinian people and environmental justice. Their critical work documenting the destruction of the land and ecosystems informs and lends weight to our denunciation of the network of complicity which arms and funds this violence³.

It must be stressed that this systemic violence underway since 1967, culminating in the genocide we see today, is not only the product of colonial ideology. It is also driven by powerful economic and geostrategic interests, one of the most important being control of energy resources. Trade in fossil fuels therefore renders third parties complicit, as by providing material resources or support they enable these crimes. This complicity takes two forms: firstly, importing gas from Israel provides it with direct financial resources which boost its military budget and give it diplomatic legitimacy. Secondly, exportation of fuel to Israel is essential for the functioning of its military apparatus - without these exports its capacity to carry out its operations would be significantly reduced.

¹ More than 61 000 people killed in Gaza since October 2023, including more than 17 000 children; at least 1.9 million people displaced (90% of the population), often several times; more than half of all hospitals out of action or destroyed, and 500 000 people suffering from famine due to the obstruction of humanitarian aid.

² In January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that there was a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza and issued a provisional measures order. A few months later, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor issued arrest warrants for the Israeli and Hamas leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity. In July 2024, the ICJ issued a historic advisory opinion calling for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. In March 2024, UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese published "Anatomy of a Genocide". A growing number of NGOs and experts also take the same view, and now state that a genocide is undeniably taking place. On 16 September 2025, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory published a report stating that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinian people.

³ Friends of the Earth International, [Climate Justice and Palestinian liberation: Mapping the complicity](#), 18 September 2025

1. Imported fossil fuels: feeding the war machine

The Israeli military complex (its warships, tanks, fighter jets and munitions factories) cannot function without a constant supply of fossil fuels, which for the most part are imported. Far from being neutral, these oil, coal and gas supply chains are directly complicit in the crimes perpetrated on the Palestinian territories.

Oil, coal and fuel at the service of the war machine

Israel is heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Its energy mix is based on coal (12.8%) and oil (37.8%), which are mostly imported, and gas (43.6%) which comes from national stocks, funded to a large extent by foreign investment⁴. It is certain that a proportion of the oil imported is refined and used as fuel for the tanks, armoured vehicles and bulldozers operating in Gaza and the West Bank. As for coal and gas, these provide electricity for the munitions factories that produce the weapons used against civilian populations⁵.

The intensive aerial bombardment of the Gaza strip is directly dependent upon kerosene. The country receives regular deliveries from the United States, and according to an investigation carried out by the Dutch organisation SOMO⁶, at least six shipments of military kerosene (JP-8) have been delivered since October 2023. It is also likely that Israel is importing military kerosene from certain European countries. However, there is a lack of transparency surrounding military exports from the European Union (EU) and its member states to Israel, although these supply chains have been documented in an investigation by Oil Change International (OCI)⁷. This analysis revealed 65 deliveries of crude oil and refined petroleum products between October 2023 and July 2024, compounded by the fact that 35 of these (54% of the total) left their port of origin after the ICJ ruling of 26 January 2024⁸ acknowledging the plausible risk of genocide of the Palestinian population in Gaza.

2. Gas exports: fuelling Israel's colonialist expansion

As well as physically supplying Israel's genocide and colonialism machine, fossil fuels also provide financial resources and a form of legitimacy which are essential for the perpetuation of its colonialist and genocidal policy. This is particularly the case for fossil gas, which Israel produces in such large quantities that it is able to export it to other countries.

Gas extraction as a source of wealth for the colonial state

Israel has been exporting gas to Jordan since 2017 and to Egypt since 2020, and by August 2023 had racked up three billion dollars (NIS 11.7 billion) in royalties from operators such as Chevron⁹. This revenue is growing, with a 25% increase from 2022 to 2023¹⁰, and Israeli gas production is set to double between 2023 and 2027¹¹.

Israel has also been exporting gas to Europe since the signature of a memorandum between the European Union, Israel and Egypt in 2022. The gas travels in pipelines via Egypt, where it is liquefied and sent on as

⁴ International Energy Agency, [Energy system of Israel](#), consulted on 23/09/2025

⁵ Disrupt Power, Global Energy Embargo for Palestine, BDS National Committee, [Toolkit: Disrupting Energy Corporations for the Liberation of Palestine](#), June 2025

⁶ SOMO, [Fuelling the flames in Gaza](#), 28 May 2024

⁷ Oil Change International, [Behind the Barrel: New Insights into the Countries and Companies Behind Israel's Fuel Supply](#), August 2024

⁸ International Court of Justice, [Ruling of 26 January 2024](#)

⁹ "Natural gas royalties jump 23%, top NIS 1 billion in first half of year", The Times of Israel, 29 August 2023

¹⁰ "Ministry: Gas royalties up \$117 million last year, exports to Jordan, Egypt up 25%", The Times of Israel, 26 February 2024

¹¹ [Israel's gas exports in times of war](#), GIS, 23 November 2023

LNG, making it difficult to trace. An analysis by Gastivists Collective shows that **France is one of six European countries which are very likely to have imported Israeli gas since October 2023**¹².

Gas starts to bring in funds from the moment exploration licences are granted – even before extraction. When a gas field (or oil field) is discovered, the area is broken up into exploration “blocks”. Companies then bid against each other to obtain an exploration licence for one or several blocks, where they subsequently develop extraction projects if these are found to be technically feasible and financially viable. The licence is generally awarded to the highest bidder.

Exploration licences were granted via this procedure to the British companies BP and Dana Petroleum, as well as to the Italian Eni, at the end of October 2023, in many cases in occupied Palestinian waters¹³. The amount paid to Israel for these is not known¹⁴.

Increasing diplomatic legitimacy for the occupation via gas exports

Gas exports are not only a financial boon but a diplomatic trump card. The various agreements signed with neighbouring countries and the European Union increase Israel’s negotiating power and control and reduce the capacity of countries dependent on Israeli gas to act in the face of the colonialist expansion and genocide perpetrated by Israel.

Israel makes no secret of the geopolitical importance of its exporter status – the Minister of Energy has declared that gas “strengthens diplomatic ties”¹⁵ and “helps promote regional stability”¹⁶.

¹² Gastivists, [“6 European countries have most likely imported Israeli Gas since 7th October 2023”](#), October 2024

¹³ Al-Haq, [“Annexing Energy - Exploiting and Preventing the Development of Oil and Gas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory - OPT”](#), December 2015

¹⁴ [“Israel awards gas exploration licences to Eni, BP and four others”](#), Reuters, 30 October 2023

¹⁵ [Israel grants initial approval for additional gas exports from Leviathan reservoir](#), The Times of Israel, 26 June 2024

¹⁶ [“Gov’t collects record gas royalties in 2023”](#), Globes, 28 February 2024

PART 2 – Control of the energy system as a tool for Israel’s oppression of the Palestinian people

As well as the energy trade flows that fuel Israel’s military and colonisation operations (see Part 1), Israel’s control of energy infrastructure represents an important part of its strategy of domination over the Palestinian people. Energy is used as a lever of asymmetric power for maintaining dependency, contributing to colonisation and repressing any aspirations of Palestinian sovereignty.

1. The energy network as a tool of colonialism

Control of energy has been used for decades as a tool for collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Israel’s stranglehold on Palestinian infrastructure and natural resources has created a dependency in which vital energy needs, such as electricity for hospitals, are completely at the mercy of the occupying power. Israel instrumentalises this dependency to achieve its military and colonial objectives. Since the beginning of the genocidal escalation in October 2023, Israel has used this power to cut off access to fuel, electricity, water and food in Gaza at will. Even before this date, the population of Gaza only had access to three or four hours of electricity per day, but now access is almost non-existent¹⁷.

Furthermore, to ensure that this domination continues, all Palestinian attempts at energy self-sufficiency are systematically crushed. The reported destruction of 90% of the solar energy projects¹⁸ in Gaza since October 2023 is not collateral damage, but proof of a deliberate strategy. This methodical destruction of alternative infrastructure¹⁹, coupled with the militarisation of the coasts (which prevents the Palestinian people accessing their own gas resources), aims to maintain total energy dependence.

This strategy of energy-based domination and colonisation can also be seen in the infrastructure of the Israeli electricity network, which functions as a powerful tool of de facto annexation²⁰. By incorporating the illegal colonies in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, this unified network deliberately erases the legal distinction between Israeli territory and the occupied territories. By supplying its colonies with electricity, Israel is not simply providing a service – it is normalising and physically reinforcing its policy of annexation, in violation of international law.

2. Energy security or military strategy?

Israeli gas infrastructure is highly militarised and was even used to justify the imposition of the naval blockade in 2008, which has been condemned by several international bodies²¹. For instance, the Ministry of Defence has established a 9.3 km security zone around the Tamar gas platform, instead of the maximum of 500 m authorised under international law²². Palestinian fishers are not allowed into this “security” zone and are harassed by the Israeli army. A journalist who accompanied a patrol described the daily interactions: “Boats which approach (...) the platforms are intercepted by one of the navy patrol boats. The intruder is

¹⁷ Statement by Abeer Al Butmeh from PENGON, Friends of the Earth International, “[For a Feminist Just Energy Transition](#)”, 8 March 2025

¹⁸ Ditto

¹⁹ “[Arab-Israeli eco-normalisation. Greenwashing settler colonialism in Palestine and the Jawlan](#)”, TNI, 16 November 2023

²⁰ SOMO, “[Powering injustice - Exploring the legal consequences for states and corporations involved in supplying energy to Israel](#)”, 17 December 2024 and Peace Now, “[Infrastructure for Annexation: The government Decided to Build Israeli Power Plants and Solar Fields in the West Bank](#)”, 12 December 2024

²¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “[The Gaza Strip: The Humanitarian Impact of the Blockade](#)”, November 2016 and Al Haq, “[Annexing Energy - Exploiting and Preventing the Development of Oil and Gas in the O.P.T.](#)”, December 2015

²² See the analysis by SOMO: “[Beneath troubled waters - Noble Energy’s exploitation of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea](#)”, 10 May 2017

ordered to leave, and if they refuse, warning shots are fired. This happens every day, **as the Gazan fishers are at pains to assert their right to fish wherever they choose.**"²³

"Wherever they choose"... This refers to the Palestinian territorial waters, enshrined in the Oslo Accords, but which Palestinians have been unable to access for 17 years. In this way, the naval blockade deprives the Palestinian people of their fishing resources, and therefore of their livelihoods. It is also worth noting that certain gas reserves operated by Israel are located in Palestinian territorial waters²⁴.

3. Instrumentalisation of the energy transition: greenwashing by the occupying force

Energy therefore plays many different roles in the colonisation and oppression of Palestine. Control of this resource can force historic populations to leave certain areas, and developing it can lock in – and even legitimise – the occupation of stolen land.

Israel has set an objective to produce 30% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. In August 2024, there were at least ten functional renewable energy plants in the West Bank, the occupied Syrian Golan and the Negev desert²⁵.

One example is the wind energy mega project which began operations in 2023 in the Syrian Golan – invaded in 1967 and then declared annexed by Israel in 1981 without international recognition. This project was heavily disputed by the Druze community, as it confiscated agricultural land belonging to the Syrian Druze inhabitants²⁶. This was one of the largest projects in the region, developed by Enlight Renewable Energy in close partnership with the local illegal colonies which own 10% of the project.

These types of projects lead to further land grabs and provide cheap energy and even income for illegal colonies. New sources of energy also encourage the creation of new colonies. In sum, both renewable energy and fossil energy can enable land-grabbing, occupation of this land and oppression of the people who live there.

They can also contribute to military violence – the company Enlight Renewable Energy has signed several partnership agreements with the Israeli army, for example for the installation of solar panels at a number of military bases²⁷.

Enlight Renewable Energy is also active in Europe, with projects in Italy, Croatia, Spain, Ireland, Hungary, Serbia, Kosovo and Sweden. Friends of the Earth Spain and Croatia are mobilising against Enlight projects in their countries²⁸.

²³ ["On the high seas with Tamar's defender"](#), Globes, 17 April 2014

²⁴ [Annexing Energy Exploiting and Preventing the Development of Oil and Gas in the O.P.T](#), Al-Haq, December 2015 and SOMO, ["Beneath troubled waters - Noble Energy's exploitation of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea"](#), 10 May 2017

²⁵ ["Occupation through renewables: Friends of the Earth groups urge governments to cut ties with Israeli energy company"](#), Friends of the Earth Europe, 29 July 2025

²⁶ ["Israel's 'green energy' land grab is meeting fierce opposition in the occupied Golan Heights"](#), The New Arab, 6 July 2023

²⁷ ["Enlight to build 45 PV units at IDF bases"](#), Globes, 23 January 2011

²⁸ ["Occupation through renewables: Friends of the Earth groups urge governments to cut ties with Israeli energy company"](#), Friends of the Earth Europe, 29 July 2025

PART 3 – Energy as a tool of colonisation in Palestine: opposing the complicity of companies and states

The energy sector is highly strategic for Israel, from a military and economic perspective, as well as for the roll out of its colonial policy of oppression of the Palestinian people. In this context, fossil and renewable energies make third parties complicit in Israel's crimes via the provision of material resources or assistance which enable Israel to commit these acts. Below is an overview of the notions of complicity and state and corporate responsibility.

1. What is complicity?

Complicity can be defined as helping another party to commit a crime. It takes the form of aiding, abetting or otherwise assisting the perpetrator of the crime, including by providing the material resources necessary for the crime to be committed.

In this case, as well as direct use of energy resources as a tool for Israel's domination and colonisation, the fossil fuel trade potentially implicates third parties in two different ways:

1. **Imports from Israel:** Purchasing fossil fuels (mainly gas) from Israel provides the country with direct financial resources which fuel its economy, including its military budget. This act constitutes a form of diplomatic support and legitimisation.
2. **Exports to Israel:** Provision of fuel to Israel is essential for the functioning of its military apparatus. Without this energy supply, Israel's capacity to carry out its operations which cause the death of Palestinians would be vastly reduced.

2. State responsibility

Under international law, particularly the **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**, states are obliged to prevent and punish this crime. However, many states are currently not only in breach of this fundamental obligation, but also at risk of being complicit in genocide by providing direct or indirect material or financial support to Israel. The authorisation to import or export fossil fuels is a stark example of this.

This issue has been thrown into even sharper relief following the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rulings:

- Ruling of 26 January 2024, acknowledging the plausible risk of genocide committed by Israel in Gaza.
- Ruling of 19 July 2024, defining the occupation of Palestinian territories as illegal.

Continued financing of Israel's crimes by purchasing and supplying fuel in full knowledge of these court rulings is tantamount to complicity.

3. Corporate responsibility

Corporate responsibility on human rights issues is established and enshrined by ever stricter regulation at national, regional and international level. The implication of companies in mass crimes is being increasingly documented.

In this vein, the recent report by UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, entitled "From economy of occupation to economy of genocide"²⁹, analyses the mechanisms by which economic interests support Israel's colonial aspirations. The report reveals how companies profit from an economy based on illegal

²⁹ [A/HRC/59/23: From economy of occupation to economy of genocide - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 \(Advance edited version\)](#)

occupation, apartheid, and now genocide. As shown here, companies in the fossil energy sector are undeniably part of this ecosystem.

At international level, the applicable regulatory framework is the United Nations Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights (UNGP). Although other instruments, some of which are more ambitious, exist or are being developed³⁰, these principles set out the universally recognised minimum standard. The duty of care stipulated by these principles becomes even more meaningful in a context of serious international crimes. In such a situation, financial support is no longer a simple commercial transaction but a form of complicity. In light of this, energy sector companies risk their support being classed as complicity, whether this takes the form of imports, exports, or investments linked to Israel. This risk is all the greater for the fact that, like states, they cannot claim ignorance of the crimes committed and the legal risks stemming from these.

Transforming energy from a tool of oppression to a vector for liberation – our demands

As energy is a powerful tool for oppression, it must become a central concern in our struggles for the liberation of Palestine. Tackling the Israeli energy sector provides some breathing space for the Palestinian people, who are fighting for their survival, and gives them the means for self-determination.

For these reasons, Friends of the Earth France calls on states and companies to:

- **End imports of Israeli gas:** unlike Russian gas, Israeli gas which transits via Egypt to Europe represents a very small share of European imports³¹. It would be much easier to do without these imports than it would be to stop using Russian gas (although even this would have been possible as of 2025 with the right policy³²). The European Union must terminate the memorandum signed in 2022 with Israel and Egypt. According to Global Witness, this memorandum exposes the European Union to a violation of international law, particularly because the pipeline transporting gas from Israel to Egypt and passing through Palestinian territorial waters is illegal³³. Ending imports of Israeli gas would mark a clear economic and political shift away from Israel, with very little impact on Europe. France, which has finally recognised the State of Palestine, must turn its belated symbolic gestures into real action, and lead the European countries in **terminating the 2022 memorandum on importation of Israeli gas**.
- **End all financial support for gas projects in Israel:** revenue from gas exploration licences, extraction and exports is a source of funding for genocide and occupation. Gas companies cannot carry out their activities without the support of numerous financial actors (banks, investors, insurers). These actors must stop providing capital for Israel's gas development and refuse to work with companies implicated in the genocide and occupation.
- **End all energy exports to Israel** to cut off the supply to the war machine and occupation infrastructure. Colombia, for example, implemented an embargo in June 2024³⁴. Prior to this, Colombia was providing 50% of Israeli coal imports – this was therefore a severe blow to Israel.

³⁰ Friends of the Earth International, [UN binding treaty on transnational corporations and human rights](#)

³¹ 0.6 giga metres squared of liquefied gas were delivered to Europe from Egypt in 2023. A negligible amount compared with European consumption of 295Gm3. Gastivists, "[6 European Countries have most likely imported Israeli gas since October 7th 2023](#)", October 2024

³² E3G, "[EU can stop Russian gas imports by 2025](#)", 23 March 2022

³³ Global Witness, "[EU risks breaching international law over Israeli gas deal, legal experts say](#)", 14 July 2025

³⁴ Manuel Rueda, AP, "[Colombia will suspend coal exports to Israel over war in Gaza](#)", 9 June 2024

- **Develop renewable energy production controlled by the Palestinian people:** restoring the Palestinian peoples' access to energy is now a question of survival. Without energy, healthcare cannot be provided, food cannot be stored safely, and it is impossible to connect with the outside world to speak out about the horrors taking place. Renewable energy, unlike fossil fuels, can be decentralised and controlled by the people, with democratic governance systems. Projects such as those implemented by PENGON/Friends of the Earth Palestine are essential – these involve the development of solar power units to enable communities in the Jordan valley to process the milk they depend on so that it can be stored³⁵. Renewable energy has the potential to eventually put power back in the hands of the Palestinian people – it is a vital tool for the exercise of their sovereignty.
- **Do not cooperate with companies involved in renewable energy projects in occupied areas,** such as Enlight Renewable Energy. Developing renewable energy is essential for sustainable societies, but it must not follow the same model as the fossil-based energy system, which destroys human rights and social justice.

As well as these specific demands on the energy sector, Friends of the Earth France also calls for an end to Israel's impunity at global level and for states to use all available diplomatic and economic mechanisms to deter Israeli attacks on Gaza and the West Bank, put an end to the genocide and urgently resolve the dire humanitarian situation³⁶.

³⁵ Abeer Al Butmeh from PENGON in Friends of the Earth International, "[For a Feminist Just Energy Transition](#)", 8 March 2025

³⁶ "[Friends of the Earth International strongly condemns the full siege currently imposed by Israel on the West Bank](#)", 23 June 2025