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HRDD Phase 2 Partner Assessment Report: Israel/Palestine

Submitted to the Executive Board by the Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC)

Section 1. Introduction

The HRAC phase 1 HRDD report on Israel/Palestine concluded that there are serious indications that Israel has committed and continues to commit international crimes and serious human rights violations, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and potential acts of genocide. This phase 2 report sets out our assessment of three Maastricht University (UM) partners in Israel/Palestine (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Rabin Medical Center and Enspire) and provides recommendations on these partners to the Executive Board. Section 5 describes considerations regarding Ministries, State Organs, and the Status of Public Universities in Israel, and Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 provide general recommendations. The Committee notes that UM currently does not have any strategic partnerships with any Palestinian institutions. For this reason, the report includes assessment only of Israeli partners.

Section 2. Partnership with Hebrew University of Jerusalem

1. General introduction

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem is a large university: 23,500 students (from 66 countries); 6000 academic and administrative staff:¹ roughly similar in size to Maastricht University. It ranks nr. 281 in the QS world University Rankings 2025 (Maastricht University ranks nr. 230).²

HUJI's "international involvement" is listed on its website: "[HUJI] has signed 150 agreements for joint projects with other universities and 25 agreements for student exchanges with 14 countries."³ Maastricht University is no longer identified as an exchange destination,⁴ and otherwise only identified as a partner in an ERASMUS+ project within ASPHER that ended in 2024.⁵

¹ <https://en.huji.ac.il/university-numbers>, accessed 16 June 2025.

² <https://www.topuniversities.com/world-university-rankings?countries=il>, accessed 16 June 2025.

³ See footnote 1.

⁴ Current list, archived version of Dec. 26, 2024.

⁵ [HUJI description](#) of the "Sharing European Educational Experience in Public Health for Israel" (SEEEPHI), accessed Sep. 10, 2025. [Project overview at ASPHER](#), accessed Sep. 10, 2025.

2. Partnership under consideration

In 2017, UM and HUJI, specifically the UM Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience (FPN) and the HUJI Department of Psychology, engaged in a student exchange agreement, establishing an exchange program for students, with the aim of allowing students of both universities to “gain international experience, enhance academic and research opportunities, and promote greater cultural understanding”.⁶ The agreement is open to two students per year (if each stay one semester), and explicitly excludes any financial transaction between the two institutions.⁷

The agreement was initially for 5 years with the possibility of extension. The exchange program remained active until it was frozen by UM in spring 2024.

3. Potentially problematic aspects, in terms of serious human rights violations, and/or international crimes.

In our analysis of the HUJI we found a number of potentially problematic practices at the university related to serious human rights violations, and/or international crimes.

Relation to the Israeli military (IDF)

The university has active connections with the IDF. As concluded in our phase 1 report, the IDF is actively involved in serious human rights violations and international crimes, including potential acts of genocide.⁸ Therefore, these connections are problematic. We have found multiple instances of direct support provided to IDF by HUJI.

First, HUJI has set up a support program for students who are active IDF reservists. Reservist military service is mandatory for many Israeli citizens after completion of mandatory military service, and as reservist they can be, and are, called upon to serve in active reservist duty. However, it is possible to refuse to serve, which many thousands (estimates fluctuate between 15,000 – 100,000) are currently doing. Refusing active reserve duty usually has no consequences or, in rare cases, means one has to spend a short period in prison.⁹ Through the support program at HUJI, reservists can receive financial support, credit reduction and passing grades, as well as other types of measures

⁶ 2017 Student Exchange Agreement between UM and HUJI, p. 1.

⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

⁸ See HRAC report phase 1 on Israel/Palestine.

⁹ Staff, T. (2025) “Army reservist reportedly jailed for refusing to serve in West Bank, Gaza”, *The Times of Israel*, 12 May 2025. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/army-reservist-reportedly-jailed-for-refusing-to-serve-in-west-bank-gaza/>, accessed 27 June 2025; Harel, A. (2024) “Refusal to serve in the Israel Defense Forces reserves in an era of anti-democratic judicial reform”, *Critical Military Studies* 10(4): 562-567; Rapoport, M. (2025) “The Israeli army is facing its biggest refusal crisis in decades”, *+972 Magazine* April 11, 2025. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-army-refusal-crisis-gaza-war/>, accessed 27 June 2025; Margalit, R. (2025) “The Israeli Soldiers who refuse to fight in Gaza”, *The New Yorker* May 14, 2025. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-israeli-soldiers-who-refuse-to-fight-in-gaza>, accessed 27 June 2025.

making it easier for these students to pass their studies (e.g. extra time for exams, easing mandatory attendance requirements). These include special measures for injured reservists.¹⁰

We recognize the need to support injured students (no matter the cause of their injury), in line with their human rights. However, the provision of credit reduction and financial support go above and beyond the duty of care, towards pro-active support of students engaging in military action. It is extraordinary that students are able to skip meeting program-level ILOs solely through participation in active military service with no limitation indicated on the kinds of courses being passed without assessment. This provides a concrete reward to students who join the IDF and engage in military actions, including those actions in violation of international law (see phase 1 report). These rewards are not available to students engaged in any other form of extra-curricular activity, or undergoing other special circumstances. Relatedly, HUJI does not provide institutional support to those refusing to serve in the IDF.

Second, various military education programs for the IDF are taught at HUJI, including the Havatzalot program which educates IDF military intelligence officers, and for which “the officers in training will wear their uniforms on campus and have separate living quarters monitored by security cameras and that can only be entered with a biometric pass”,¹¹ and the Talpiot program which teaches military technological expertise.¹²

Third, the HUJI indicates that they “provide diverse logistics equipment to several military units” - this is presented by the university as a positive contribution to the military effort.¹³

According to the “Australian friends of the Hebrew University” (an association that raises funding and awareness for HUJI), “The Hebrew University is not only Israel’s first and foremost university but it is also the university that has the most important ties and collaboration with the Israel Defence Force [hereafter: IDF]”. They share a list of ties between HUJI and the IDF.¹⁴

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<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%94%D7%A7%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%AA%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%90%D7%A7%D7%93%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA>, accessed 16 June 2025.

¹¹ <https://www.jta.org/quick-reads/hebrew-universitys-new-army-intelligence-program-not-welcomed-by-all>, accessed 18 June 2025.

¹² We are much indebted to our colleagues at Radboud University Nijmegen for their analysis on this point. See Buydens, L, Leijenhorst, C., Bovend’Eert, P & Kole, J. (2025) “Advies aangaande de samenwerking met Hebrew University of Jerusalem International”, p.8. Additional sources: <https://austfhu.org.au/hebrew-university-partners-with-idf-to-offer-prestigious-academic-military-program-for-intelligence-corps-officers/>, accessed 18 June 2025; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2019-04-14/ty-article/.premium/hebrew-university-to-host-israeli-army-base-on-campus/0000017f-dbe6-d856-a37f-ffe6bf330000>, accessed 18 June 2025; <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/jerusalem-hebrew-university-to-host-military-intelligence-program-586822>, accessed 18 June 2025.

¹³ <https://campaign.huji.ac.il/help-university-community>, accessed 23 June 2025; Report on Israeli-Dutch academic ties, p. 8.

¹⁴ <https://austfhu.org.au/when-duty-calls-the-hebrew-university-is-always-there/>, accessed 18 June 2025.

Relation to the illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem

We are also concerned regarding how the HUJI relates to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine (the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem),¹⁵ particularly because the HUJI website publicly advertises their ongoing archaeological research in the West Bank.¹⁶ A [press release](#) and [YouTube video](#) clearly identify the location of archaeological work at the Fortress of Hyrcania located within the West Bank.¹⁷ Israel, as a signatory of the 1954 Hague Convention, is required by art. 5 to “support the competent national authorities of the occupied territory in safeguarding and preserving [their] cultural property.” This project concerns a collaboration between HUJI, Carson-Newman University, and American Veterans Archeological Recovery, and we have not seen any indication that Palestinian authorities were consulted and/or have approved this project.¹⁸

In addition, we note that there has been a debate regarding the location of the HUJI Mount Scopus campus, and whether or not this is located outside the 1967 green line, in Palestine.¹⁹ However, we find that the evidence is inconclusive and are not in a position to make a judgment on this matter based on the evidence available.

Repression of voices critical of serious human rights violations, international crimes and potential genocide

We are aware of one case where a law professor, Prof. Shalhoub-Kevorkian, was called on by the rector of HUJI “to resign in late 2023 after she signed a letter calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and describing Israel’s campaign as genocide, and she was briefly suspended over the podcast cited in her interrogation”.²⁰ This case raised concerns about academic freedom at HUJI (a possible human rights violation). However, this situation led to protests,²¹ it appears to be an isolated incident, and we found no indications of any other such incidents.²²

¹⁵ REF ICJ / see also phase 1 report.

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gz8ybgXQSwQ&t=1s> , accessed 25 May 2025.

¹⁷ Geolocation notes available on request.

¹⁸ In general, issues numerous issues surrounding Israel archeological projects in the West Bank have been well documented. Maastricht University should be wary of such issues when assessing any Israeli academic partner involved in archeological projects. See: <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2024/10/03/israeli-archaeology-bill-raises-fears-of-west-bank-annexation>, accessed 22 June 2025;

<https://emekshaveh.org/en/about-us/>, accessed 22 June 2025; Report on Israeli-Dutch academic ties, p. 37

¹⁹ Reference to reports Nijmegen and Amsterdam?

²⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/26/political-arrest-palestinian-academic-nadera-shalhoub-kevorkian-israel-civil-liberties-threat>, accessed 27 June 2025;

<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2023-10-29-hebrew-university-of-jerusalem/>, accessed 27 June 2025; Report on Israeli-Dutch academic ties, p. 8.

²¹ <https://www.academia4equality.com/en/post/call-for-the-immediate-release-of-prof-nadera-shalhoub-kevorkian-and-the-termination-of-the-investi> accessed 25 June 2025.

²² She is back to work at HUJI: <https://en.law.huji.ac.il/people/nadera-shalhoub-kevorkian>, accessed 25 June 2025.

Presentation of a one-sided narrative that supports the Israeli government's international crimes

Since there is ample evidence on the important role played by narrative in relation to (armed) conflict and other forms of human rights violations,²³ and because universities are authoritative actors in society that contribute to the creation of narratives, we find it relevant to consider the role the partner plays in this respect.

HUJI has not taken any official position in relation to the war. There has been no statement either condemning or supporting the Israeli government's international crimes as detailed in the phase 1 report, nor supporting them. Very recently the presidents of 5 Israeli universities did publish an open letter to president Netanyahu, condemning the immorality of "the cruel and indiscriminate harm being done by Israel to non-combatant men, women, and children", ministers and members of the Knesset advocating for the intentional destruction of Gaza and the forced displacement of its civilian population".²⁴ However, this letter was not published on the HUJI website or mentioned on its social media. One could argue that it is important that the university remains neutral on topics that are so controversial in Israeli society, so that all students who hold different political views feel welcome. However, we find that the university in its public communication actually presents a one-sided narrative that supports the pro-war rhetoric of the Israeli government. For example:

- On the HUJI website homepage, there is a countdown for how long the hostages have been kidnapped by Hamas, but not the duration of the war, or how long Gazans have been without aid, or how many civilians have died in Gaza (to give some examples). There is a call to remember members of the Israeli military who died in Gaza, but no other victims of the war are mentioned.²⁵
- Official communications by the university board stress the need to bring back hostages ("there is no greater priority!"), but don't mention any other international crimes^{26 27}

²³ See for example Cobb, S. (2013) *Speaking of Violence: The Politics and Poetics of Narrative and Conflict Resolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Kvernbeek, T., & Bøe-Hansen, O. (2017). How to win wars: The role of the war narrative. In *Narration as argument* (pp. 215-234). Cham: Springer International Publishing;

²⁴ https://english.tau.ac.il/presidents-letter-on-famine-in-gaza?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed 3 August 2025.

²⁵ <https://en.huji.ac.il/>.

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<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%94%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%98%D7%94-%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%AA-%D7%9C%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%A2%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%94-%D7%A2%D7%9B%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%95>

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<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%94%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%98%D7%94-%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%AA-%D7%9C%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%A2%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%94-%D7%A2%D7%9B%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%95>

As explained above, HUJI takes elaborate measures to support Israeli reservist military, yet no such measures exist (for example) for Israelis who refuse to enlist as eservists and therefore spend days in jail, or for Palestinian (“Arab”) students who have family members in Gaza and are severely psychologically affected by witnessing their family members fighting starvation or fleeing from bombs.

Therefore, instead of being neutral, the institutional position and narrative presented by HUJI is a one-sided narrative that supports the international crimes being committed by the Israeli government, by stressing the victimhood of Israelis while ignoring the suffering of Palestinians.

4. Potentially positive aspects, in relation to the ongoing serious human rights violations, war crimes and international crimes.

In our analysis of HUJI, we found a number of potentially positive practices at the university related to serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes.

Our research gives the impression that, apart from the incident with Prof. Shalhoub-Kevorkian mentioned above, academic freedom is quite well protected at HUJI, including in relation to the currently ongoing serious human rights violations and international crimes. HUJI researchers express views and academic content in public, including in the media, from various perspectives. This includes HUJI scholars arguing in international media that “what is happening in Gaza does not need to resemble the Holocaust to qualify as genocide”,²⁸ calls for peace,²⁹ and an opinion piece by Prof. David Enoch, addressing those who believe that it cannot true be that the IDF is engaged in war crimes.³⁰ At the leadership level, we note that the HUJI rector expressed criticism of Israeli government cuts of funding for municipalities populated by Palestinians in Israel,³¹ a statement by the

<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%98%D7%A4%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A2%D6%B8%D7%9D-%D7%9B%D6%BC%D6%B0%D7%9C%D6%B8%D7%91%D6%B4%D7%99%D7%90>,
<https://new.huji.ac.il/%D7%9E%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%95%D7%94-%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%91-%D7%97%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9D>, all accessed 3 August 2025.

²⁸ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-undoubtedly-committing-genocide-holocaust-scholar-amos-goldberg>, accessed 27 June 2025.

²⁹ <https://archive.is/P1tKv#selection-295.10-297.102>), accessed 27 June 2025.

³⁰ Enoch, D. (2024) „עכשיו קראו את הפקודות שלפניכם, Haaretz 27 October 2024. Also published on the unofficial HIJU law blog: <https://www.hujiawblog.com/single-post/%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%95-%D7%91%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%95-%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%94-%D7%A4%D7%A9%D7%A2%D7%99-%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94-%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9A-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%99%D7%AA%D7%9D-%D7%99%D7%95%D7%93%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%96%D7%94>, accessed 27 June 2025.

³¹ <https://amp-cnn-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/amp.cnn.com/cnn/videos/world/2023/08/09/exp-080911aseg01-cnni-world-hebrew-univ-rector-israel-cuts-funding.cnn>, accessed 27 June 2025.

heads of Israeli universities including HUJI, stating that “we too mourn the loss of innocent life in this horrific conflict and want a better future for Palestinians and Israelis both”,³² and the recent letter signed by the president, as mentioned above.

However, we do note with concern that student protests do not seem to be allowed, and the police intervene in peaceful protests.³³

5. The HUJI psychology department

The UM partnership agreement is specifically with the psychology department of HUJI, a non-autonomous department. This department has a very strong academic track record. There are long standing and multiple connections with Dutch psychology.

At the department level, there is relatively little information available. On the website of the department, no problematic content related to the violations being studied was identified – in fact, there was no political content at all related to the war, occupation or international crimes. When looking at the faculty’s website and social media, it is as if there is no war. The only mentions, in the “research in the headlines” section highlight the victimhood of the Israeli people.³⁴

The department does not operate any military programs. Studies in psychology are not part of the “Reservist tracks” educating students for the academic reserve. Contact with the department and consultations at UM give the impression that a number of department staff are engaged in protesting the war and in pro-human rights / peacebuilding research.³⁵ However, these activities are not part of the official policy of HUJI and are for example not advertised on its websites or social media channels, including the department website and channels.

³² https://international.huji.ac.il/israeli_university_heads_on_CRUE_statement, accessed 27 June 2025.

³³ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/hebrew-u-student-protest-calls-for-end-of-war-in-gaza-stop-the-genocide/, accessed 27 June 2025; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-04-08/ty-article/.premium/hebrew-university-students-protest-gaza-war-despite-schools-attempt-to-cancel-rally/00000196-15d0-d23b-aff6-5fd05d8b0000>, accessed 27 June 2025;

³⁴ Namely: on collective trauma since October 7th; anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder since October 7th; how the Israeli society deals with bereavement and grief following the war. https://psychology.huji.ac.il/news/in_the_press, accessed 27 June 2025.

³⁵ E.g. The research of the chair of the department: <https://www.eranhalperin.com/>, and a podcast on how to stop groups from hating each other https://open.spotify.com/episode/3QFvI80JfmHLs2KelwSpmu?si=d7c976184adb4acc&fbclid=IwY2xjawLLvXBleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFIZ0dSMGhNRURmY2RxWmRIAR7hJWPJjv_O7oZ2O0VwBm5NaDsl199r8cdG5qeyXrRo-NxzRhFzWP3-WlpKJA_aem_hKvjQhtMBJeAzFgsfx8oBg&nd=1&dlsi=90e3f0acd5a24a15, accessed 27 June 2025.

6. Advice for the Executive Board

Based on the preceding considerations, the Committee concludes the following regarding HUJI.³⁶

HUJI is currently indirectly involved in serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes being committed by the Israeli government. As an institution, they are indirectly involved in such actions because of their involvement with the IDF, because of their archeological project in the West Bank, and the presentation of a one-sided narrative that supports the international crimes being committed by the Israeli government. While we acknowledge some positive actions undertaken by the university to protect human rights, we still feel that the (support for) human rights violations as detailed above cross a line so serious that Maastricht University should not want to have any strategic partnerships with the HUJI (as an institution). Therefore, we **recommend adding HUJI to the blocklist (see appendix).**

Being on the blocklist means in principle that current strategic institutional partnerships should be suspended and no new partnerships should begin, until certain conditions are met.

In the case of HUJI, this means that all activities included in the partnership with HUJI should end fully, until the institution is taken off the blocklist (see below). The main reason for this recommendation is that the symbolism of a total block, in face of the serious human rights violations and international crimes being committed by the Israeli government (see report phase 1) and the involvement of HUJI in these crimes (report phase 2), sends the strongest message regarding the unacceptability of such crimes.

(An additional element in the Executive Board's decision could be to place HUJI on the blocklist, while continuing to open our doors to *incoming students* as part of this student exchange. The main argument in favor of this position is twofold: First, this would make it possible for HUJI students to be exposed to alternative narratives and education at UM and in the Netherlands, compared to what they learn at HUJI and in the context of (current) life in Israel. Second, and more importantly, there would be positive symbolic value in keeping our doors open to HUJI students, to signal that all students are welcome and that we do not hold them responsible for the crimes of their government and/or university. This would be in line with the UM values of global citizenship, inclusion, and the UM ambition to be an "open and accessible community where all cultures, perspectives and ideas come together", that "welcome[s] talented people from all over the world".³⁷)

³⁶ In our deliberations the Committee adhered to section 4.2.4 of our Working Principles, on ensuring impartiality.

³⁷ UM strategic programme 2022-2026, p. 25.

We therefore advise taking the following concrete steps:

1. Add HUJI to the blocklist (see appendix)
2. Inform HUJI that the institution has been added to this blocklist and share the HRAC reports (for phases 1 and 2) with HUJI leadership.
3. Inform HUJI that UM would take the institution off this blocklist if it:
 - a. Ends all archeological projects in the West Bank.
 - b. Ends all collaboration with the Israeli military (IDF), for as long as the IDF is committing international crimes or serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or
 - c. Ends the special treatment of reserve soldiers who are also students by providing them with financial support and credit reduction, as long as the IDF is committing serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes.
 - d. Publicly distances itself from the crimes being committed by the Israeli government in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
4. Make the phase 1 and 2 reports public so that all UM staff and students considering collaboration with HUJI are properly informed.

This advice can be reconsidered:

1. upon request by the University Board or Faculty leadership (there is a proponent);
2. in pursuit of a future strategic agreement (there is a concrete goal);
3. if the situation in Israel/Palestine has fundamentally improved or there is concrete evidence that HUJI has taken steps aligned with our expectations (concrete change in the situation).

Section 3. Partnership with Rabin Medical Center

1. General

Rabin Medical Center (RMC) is a large general hospital located in Petah Tikva, near Tel Aviv, within Israel's internationally recognized borders. It operates under the ownership and management of Clalit Health Services, which is the country's largest health maintenance organisation. The hospital functions as a major trauma and research center and serves as a leading teaching hospital affiliated with the Sackler Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University. RMC plays a central role in Israel's national healthcare system and is regarded as one of the country's foremost institutions for emergency preparedness, trauma care, and clinical research.

2. Partnerships under consideration

The partnership between Maastricht University and Rabin Medical Center facilitates a research collaboration between the Biochemistry Department at UM's Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML) and a team based at RMC. The project relies on the collection of blood plasma from volunteers in Israel. The plasma is then analysed in Maastricht.

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At the time of signing, no end date was fixed due to the unknown frequency of donor inclusion.

3. Potentially problematic aspects, in terms of serious human rights violations, and/or war crimes and international crimes.

There is no evidence that Rabin Medical Center has been convicted of any international crime or serious violation of human rights. However, the Committee has identified serious indications that the institution is deeply embedded within Israel's military infrastructure and logistics and contributes to the capacity and functioning of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), which is itself the subject of multiple credible findings concerning the commission of international crimes and serious human rights violations (see phase 1 report).

Relation to the Israeli military (IDF)

RMC has long maintained an institutional relationship with the Israeli military. A formal agreement signed in 2004 between the hospital and Israel's Ministry of Defense allows for the direct referral of conscripted and career soldiers to RMC for surgeries, hospitalisation, and other medical services.³⁸ This agreement marked a structural shift by enabling the routine treatment of military personnel in a civilian hospital, and it laid the foundation for ongoing cooperation in both clinical and logistical domains. Over the first two months since October 2023, more than 1,200 wounded soldiers were brought to the hospital.³⁹ The hospital thus played a significant role in the medical response to the conflict, functioning as one of the main civilian trauma centers treating injured military personnel. Dr. Koren Feldman, the current director of Beilinson Campus (the main RMC site) and Deputy Director of RMC, is a reservist lieutenant colonel in the Israeli military and formerly served as the Head of the IDF Medical Division. According to an Israeli media report, her military background was considered an asset in her candidacy for these roles.⁴⁰ In a December 2024 interview, Dr. Feldman described the hospital as follows (translation from Hebrew): 'When I say that [RMC] enlisted for the war, it really enlisted. Anyone who walks through the corridors feels like it's a soldiers' hospital'.⁴¹

The hospital's relationship with the military extends beyond the provision of emergency care. RMC and the IDF regularly conduct joint emergency preparedness drills.⁴² Physicians from RMC have co-authored research with the IDF.⁴³ Military doctors complete specialty rotations at RMC as part of their training, and the hospital is actively involved in building the IDF's medical capacity.⁴⁴ This sustained collaboration suggests a degree of

³⁸ INN. (2004, November 15). "נחתם הסכם בין משרד הביטחון למרכז הרפואי רבין" [Cooperation agreement signed between the Ministry of Defense and Rabin Medical Center]. INN. Retrieved 6 August 2025, from <https://www.inn.co.il/news/94402>

³⁹ מנהלת בילינסון: בזמן הצפירה ביום הזיכרון קלטנו מסוק עם פצועים ונלחמנו. (2024, December 1). מערכת ישראל היום. <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/health/article/16882902> [Interview with Dr. Lena Koren Feldman]. ישראל היום.

⁴⁰ גלובס. (2025, March). לנה קורן פלדמן: הנשים המשפיעות 2025: לנה קורן פלדמן. גלובס. Retrieved 26 August 2025, from <https://www.globes.co.il/news/sparticle.aspx?did=1001503263>

⁴¹ מנהלת בילינסון: בזמן הצפירה ביום הזיכרון קלטנו מסוק עם פצועים ונלחמנו. (2024, December 1). מערכת ישראל היום. <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/health/article/16882902> [Interview with Dr. Lena Koren Feldman]. ישראל היום. (unofficial translation).

⁴² American Friends of Rabin Medical Center. (2025). *Emergency preparedness and trauma center*. AFRMC. Retrieved August 6, 2025, from <https://afrmc.org/emergencypreparedness.php>

⁴³ Chen, J., Nadler, R., Schwartz, D., Tien, H., Cap, A. P., & Glassberg, E. (2015). Needle thoracostomy for tension pneumothorax: The Israeli Defense Forces experience. *Canadian Journal of Surgery*, 58(3 Suppl 3), S118-S124. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cjs.012914>

⁴⁴ News1. (2011, March). מעתה: חיילים יכולים לפנות למרכז הרפואי רבין לקבלת טיפול רפואי. [Archived article ID 001-D-57915-00]. News1. Retrieved 6 August 2025, from <https://www.news1.co.il/Archive/001-D-57915-00.html>.

institutional integration between RMC and the IDF that exceeds the ordinary requirements of civilian trauma care in a country without separate military hospitals.⁴⁵

In light of the findings of the Phase I report regarding Israel's conduct in recent armed conflicts—including serious indications of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and potentially genocide—the Committee is concerned that the role played by RMC, while civilian in character, contributes to the maintenance and operational capacity of an actor (the IDF) credibly accused of committing international crimes. The Committee acknowledges that, under international humanitarian law, wounded and sick soldiers, irrespective of their affiliation, are entitled to receive medical care. The provision of such care by civilian hospitals does not, in itself, raise human rights concerns. However, the Committee notes that RMC's role goes beyond emergency treatment and includes sustained institutional cooperation with the IDF, including shared infrastructure, research collaboration, and the training of military personnel, as detailed above. This alignment is further reflected in the hospital's public messaging and institutional practices. RMC has hosted military rank ceremonies on its premises,⁴⁶ celebrated the enlistment and redeployment of both staff and patients to combat roles,⁴⁷ and referred to its personnel as 'medical warriors on the front lines.'⁴⁸ In this context, the cumulative effect of logistical, medical, and research support may contribute to the military's operational capacity during ongoing violations. This is particularly significant in the context of protracted and high-intensity conflicts, where the distinction between humanitarian care and strategic support may become blurred.

Relation to the illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem

Rabin Medical Center affirms that it is a public hospital providing equal access to healthcare for all of Israel's diverse religious and cultural groups, and it notes that it routinely treats seriously ill patients from Palestine. However, in practice, access for Palestinians living under occupation is heavily restricted. Patients from the West Bank and Gaza are not explicitly barred from receiving care at RMC's Hematology Department or participating in related research. However, they must obtain an exit permit from the Israeli

⁴⁵ Israel does not maintain separate military hospitals, Ghert-Zand, R. (2024, February 22). *Inside RAM 2, the IDF Medical Corps unit that cares for hospitalized soldiers*. *The Times of Israel*. Retrieved 6 August 2025, from <https://www.timesofisrael.com/inside-ram-2-the-idf-medical-corps-unit-that-cares-for-hospitalized-soldiers/>

⁴⁶ RMC. (2025, July 15). [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DMpZrWboBB>

⁴⁷ RMC. (2025, July 15). *Instagram post celebrating an employee joining the IDF* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DJoDoEvolRB/>; RMC. (2025, May). *Like a brother, from the moment you enter the hospital and put on a uniform....* Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DJoDoEvolRB/>

⁴⁸ Rabin Medical Center Friends. (2024, December). *מלחמת חרבות ברזל* [Operation Iron Swords]. <https://rmcfriends.com/מלחמת-חרבות-ברזל>

authorities for treatment in Israel.⁴⁹ According to the World Health Organization, “[f]rom 2008 to 2022, permit applications by patients, over 70,000 or a third (30%) were delayed or denied.⁵⁰ Although hospital reports state that there are “thousands upon thousands” of Palestinian patients from the Occupied Palestinian Territories⁵¹ access remains uneven and highly contingent on a permit regime. While RMC is not responsible for the permit regime, its entanglement with state structures enforcing it raises concerns. Under international law, Israel’s control over the occupied Palestinian territory entails obligations to ensure non-discriminatory access to essential services, including healthcare,⁵² particularly in the context of prolonged occupation. The ICJ has described Israel’s permit regime as a key component of a broader system of segregation, if not apartheid.⁵³

6. Advice for the Executive Board

The Committee notes that the partnership with RMC is clearly focused on civilian scientific objectives.

However, taking the above into account, the Committee concludes that RMC’s involvement in military support—while not directly constituting the commission of international crimes—represents a structural contribution to the functioning of the IDF at a time when the latter is engaged in international crimes and serious violations of human rights. The hospital’s role sits on the mid-range of the contribution continuum, encompassing both active collaboration and institutional compliance. The Committee acknowledges the challenges faced by civilian institutions operating in militarised environments. Nonetheless, the indicators of involvement would be sufficiently serious to merit inclusion of RMC on the blocklist (see Appendix 1) if this were a strategic institutional

⁴⁹ Clarfield, A. M., & Dechtman, I. D. (2018). Access to medical care for Palestinians in Israel: Delays in a difficult historical context. *American Journal of Public Health*, 108(1), 15–16.
<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2017.304196>.

⁵⁰ World Health Organization, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. (2022, July). *15 years of blockade and health in Gaza* [Factsheet]. Retrieved August 7, 2025, from https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/15_years_of_blockade_and_health_in-gaza.pdf; see also Rajvanshi, A. (2024, March 8). *How Israeli and Palestinian medical volunteers work across borders to save lives*. *Time*. Retrieved 7 August, from <https://www.time.com/6899026/israel-palestine-medical-volunteers/>.

⁵¹ American Friends of Rabin Medical Center. (2025). *Humanitarian Aid & Bridge to Peace*. AFRMC. Retrieved August 7, 2025, from <https://www.afrmc.org/humanitarianaid.php>

⁵² Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 56: Occupying powers have a duty to ensure medical services. International law does not impose a general obligation on an occupying power to provide access to healthcare within its own territory. However, such an obligation may arise when adequate care is unavailable in the occupied territory and the occupying power actively restricts access to essential treatment. In this context, Israel’s permit regime - combined with its control over movement - raises concerns under both humanitarian and human rights law, particularly where restrictions are applied in a discriminatory manner. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, Art. 12; International Court of Justice, 2024, paras. 229.

⁵³ International Court of Justice. (2024, July 19). *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Advisory Opinion, paras. 180–229)

partnership. The Committee does not recommend any new institutional strategic partnerships with RMC under current conditions. Any existing or potential future individual collaboration should undergo a thorough self-assessment under the TISK/HRDD framework.

The Committee distinguishes between RMC's institutional alignment and the nature of the current research collaboration. The partnership between Maastricht University and RMC - focused on plasma research - is not an institutional strategic partnership with long-term strategic objectives, but rather a research partnership that facilitates a specific, non-strategic, health focused research project that does not, in itself, contribute to the commission of international crimes or serious human rights violations.⁵⁴ Provided that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that the research is not diverted to military use, the Committee recommends that this partnership may continue.

⁵⁴ The Committee decided to review all potential institutional strategic partnerships during the pilot phase of implementing the Human Rights Due Diligence Framework to ensure no potentially relevant partnerships were omitted. After careful consideration of the evidence, we have concluded that the partnership with RMC is not an institutional strategic partnership but a research partnership.

Section 4. Partnership with Enspire

General introduction

Enspire ^{5.1 lid 2 i, 5.1 lid 1 c, 5.1 lid 2 f} that supports researchers to secure EU funding, including Horizon, ERC, Marie-Sklodowska actions, European Innovation Council (EIC), and EU funding for companies. ^{5.1 lid 2 i, 5.1 lid 1 c, 5.1 lid 2 f}



Partnership

The strategic partnership with UM has involved Enspire providing support to FHML and specifically GROW (School of Oncology and Reproduction) on a funding application to the EIC Transition Call.

Partner evaluation

The company has a clear focus on grant-writing services and consultation. There is no evidence that Enspire is indirectly or directly involved in any of the issues identified in our phase 1 report.

Advice for the Executive Board

UM can continue to collaborate with Enspire.

⁵⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/org-details/905336988> (accessed 9th September 2025)

Section 5. Legal and Institutional Considerations for HRDD Phase II Assessments in Israel-Palestine: Ministries, State Organs, and the Status of Public Universities

Given the phase 1 report findings, in the current context, the Committee advises against entering into or continuing partnerships with any organs of the Israeli State. While under domestic law, ministries and other public bodies are often constituted as separate legal persons, with their own rights and obligations, international law treats the State as a single legal entity.⁵⁶ For the purpose of assessing institutional cooperation, the State is understood organically: its ministries, agencies, and public authorities are not isolated actors but constituent organs of one unified subject of international law. Accordingly, cooperation with a ministry—such as the Ministry of Health—cannot be meaningfully distinguished from cooperation with the State itself. Given the serious and well-documented violations currently attributed to the State of Israel, any such engagement would raise significant concerns under the HRDD Framework.

This analysis does not automatically extend to Israeli public universities, which—although publicly funded—generally operate with legal and administrative autonomy and are not considered organs of the State under international law. However, this status depends on context. Where a university acts under the direction or control of the State or participates in activities aligned with State policy—such as military collaborations or discriminatory practices—it may, in specific cases, be understood as contributing to the State’s conduct or objectives.

⁵⁶ International Law Commission. (2001). *Draft articles on responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts*, Art. 4. UN Doc. A/56/49(Vol. I)/Corr.4; see also International Law Commission. (2001). *Draft articles on responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts, with commentaries*, p. 35, para. 6. UN Doc. A/56/10.

Appendix 1: Recommendations regarding the Blocklist and the Brightlist

The Human Rights Advisory Committee recommends that the Executive Board create and formally publish on the UM website two lists: one, a “**blocklist**” of partner institutions with whom we do not want to be associated because of their involvement in serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes; and a “**brightlist**” of partner institutions with whom we are proud to be in a partnership, because of their positive action against serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes, in countries where such violations occur.

(a) The Blocklist

The goal of the blocklist is to: a) motivate partner institutes to change their behaviour insofar as they are involved in international crimes; b) send a strong signal regarding the minimum expectations UM holds towards partner institutions (i.e. not to be involved in international crimes); c) provide information for individuals at UM considering partnership with these partners.

For institutions on the blocklist, this means that UM does not engage in any strategic partnerships with such institutions, unless they cease all involvement in serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes.

In cases where the partner institution is involved in serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes, so that they are on the blocklist, yet (some of) the activities resulting from the partnership contribute positively to the realisation of human rights, these activities could be exempted from the overall block of shared activities.

(b) The Brightlist

The goal of the brightlist is to: a) motivate and support partner institutes to take a positive and constructive role in the realisation of human rights, in particular in situations where this is challenging because of local circumstances that entail serious human rights violations and/or international crimes; b) encourage individuals and leaders at UM to engage in partnerships with such institutions.

For institutions on the brightlist, this means that UM commits to actively supporting and upholding these partnerships, for example by showcasing positive outcomes of such partnerships, and/or providing financial support to initiatives with these partners. As mentioned in the HRDD framework, the consequences of strategic partners being listed either on the block- or brightlist does not apply to individual collaborations or non-strategic partnerships.

Appendix 2: Recommendation regarding university communication

The Human Rights Advisory Committee also recommends that the Executive Board creates a policy setting out how the university communicates in terms of new developments internationally regarding serious human rights violations, war crimes or international crimes. In our view, such a policy should include outreach to UM community members with personal and/or professional ties to countries or peoples involved.

From: [Rector of the Hebrew University](#)
To: [Letschert, Rianne \(CVB\)](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Follow-up
Date: zondag 14 september 2025 12:17:38
Attachments: [image003.jpg](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

5.1 lid 2 e

Dear President Letschert,

Thank you for your message and the detailed explanation provided. Unfortunately, your message did not remove all our concerns. In fact, to some extent it increased them.

It appears from what you describe that the due diligence review you are conducting focuses on the status of the Hebrew University as a strategic partner and its potential involvement in serious human rights violations. The three sets of questions enumerated below indeed aim at such institutional level of analysis. At the same time, the questions that were presented to [REDACTED] 5.1 lid 2 e focused on the relationship between the psychology department and the larger university, the positions taken by the department on the war and any military programs involving the department. These questions appears to us suitable for a fact-finding process leading up to risk assessment regarding the department in question, but not regarding the partner institution itself - that is, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This is why we raised with you our concern about issuing findings about the Hebrew University that would affect the broader relations between our institutions - and in particular, findings on the application of the three assessment criteria you list below to the Hebrew University as a whole - without inviting us to provide relevant information about our institution as a whole during the fact-finding process itself.

The reassurance you provided - that no collaboration at the individual researcher level will be affected - while welcomed in and of itself, does not address the concern that a finding by the committee regarding our university's conduct, legal standing and public reputation will be issued after a fact-finding process in which we were not invited to effectively participate, and which, as far as the Hebrew University as a whole is concerned, was conducted *ex parte*. This concern has practical dimensions, since such an outcome could adversely affect our strategic partnership relations on an institutional level and hamper any future cooperation between our universities. Moreover, as you can imagine, it also troubles us that findings of such a sensitive nature, which might cause our institution actual reputational harm, could be based on inaccurate information and tendentious allegations which we could not refute in real time, even if the executive board in Maastricht would later on be persuaded by the responses we would be invite to make.

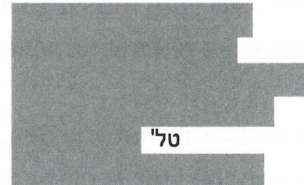
While we can understand your point of view regarding the timeline of the work of the committee and the completion of the evidence gathering stage, we respectfully submit that without our effective institutional input such evidence gathering exercise

might be regarded as partial, flawed and even misleading. We would kindly request you to reconsider your position on the possibility of facilitating our interaction with your committee so as to allow them to reevaluate their factual report before issuing their advice. This, we believe, will strengthen the substantive and procedural quality of your due diligence process and render it more fair towards us,

With kind regards,

Tamir Sheafer

5.1 lid 2 e | Rector
The Hebrew University of
Jerusalem



From: Letschert, Rianne (CVB) 5.1 lid 2 e

Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 6:40 PM

To: Rector of the Hebrew University 5.1 lid 2 e

Cc: 5.1 lid 2 e

Subject: Re: Follow-up

Dear Rector 5.1 lid 2 e

Thank you very much for your message and for taking time to engage in this dialogue. It is very much appreciated.

We approach global engagement with countries and partners where human rights are under pressure with "yes, we collaborate, unless we have major concerns". At the same time, we find it important that Maastricht University itself and our institutional strategic partners are not contributing in any way to serious violations of human rights or international crimes.

Our partner assessment therefore focuses on the partner institution, and not solely on the individual partner activity that we collaborate on. The aim of our partner assessment is to make an assessment of whether there are serious indications of whether a partner institution/organisation is involved in contributing to international crimes or serious violations of human rights. Our partner assessment focusses on the following three key questions:

1. Has the partner been convicted for international crimes and/or serious violations of

- human rights? Are there indications that the partner is/has been, involved in such violations?
2. Are there (one or more) indications that the partner is involved with the military or in warfare, such as controversial weapon development, and thereby contributing to violations of international law?
 3. If the answer to one or both of the previous questions is 'yes', what is the level of involvement in such violations of the partner?

Five weeks after we have contacted you, our assessment committee has approached colleagues at the HUJI Psychology Department to ask for their input, experiences and views, as the collaboration is mostly with them, but the scope of this exchange collaboration may be wider because students also follow courses at different faculties.

In your message, you refer to 'our broader cooperation' and 'wider aspects of our collaboration'. In our current assessment (according to our current framework), the committee is not looking at individual academic collaborations between HUJI and Maastricht University, such as research collaborations between individual academic staff at our universities.

Our Human Rights Due Diligence Framework explicitly states that, indeed, the findings and preliminary advice drafted by our committee will always be presented to the respective partner, before finalising the advice and our Executive Board taking a final decision. I fully understand your request to meet with the committee members. At this moment, though, our committee has already completed its evidence gathering report and is finalising its draft advice. We will certainly share the preliminary findings of the committee with you soon, to give you a chance to respond to the finding. After that response, our committee will decide what its final advice will be. After the final advice and Executive Board's decision, I will also let you know our decision, including the considerations upon which this decision is based on.

I hope that this message will have taken away some of your concerns.

With best wishes,
Rianne Letschert.

Prof.dr. Rianne Letschert
Bestuursvoorzitter/ President
Professor international law and victimology

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Op 7 sep 2025 om 14:50 heeft Rector of the Hebrew University

5.1 lid 2 e

> het volgende geschreven:

Dear President Letschert,

Thank you very much for the informative and constructive meeting last week. It was a pleasure to engage in such a direct and open dialogue.

Following up, we would like to inform you that we spoke with the Head of our Psychology Department regarding the questions they received from the U Maastricht Human Rights Advisory Committee about our exchange agreement.

We would appreciate clarification on the scope of this inquiry and whether it concerns only our student exchange agreement in Psychology or our broader cooperation between HUJI and the University of Maastricht.

If the Committee's overall assessment is intended to review wider aspects of our collaboration, both present and future, we would kindly request to have the opportunity either to meet with the committee members in person or to respond to their questions directly before the assessment is finalized.

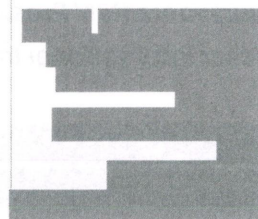
Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Best regards,

5.1 lid 2 e

Rector

Hebrew University of Jerusalem



Dear President Letschert,

Thank you very much for the informative and constructive meeting last week. It was a pleasure to engage in such a direct and open dialogue. Following up, we would like to inform you that we spoke with the Head of our Psychology Department regarding the questions they received from the U Maastricht Human Rights Advisory Committee about our exchange agreement.

We would appreciate clarification on the scope of this inquiry and whether it concerns only our student exchange agreement in Psychology or our broader cooperation between HUJI and the University of Maastricht.

If the Committee's overall assessment is intended to review wider aspects of our collaboration, both present and future, we would kindly request to have the opportunity either to meet with the committee members in person or to respond to their questions directly before the assessment is finalized.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Best regards,
Tamir Sheafer
Rector
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

From: Letschert, Rianne (CVB) 5.1 lid 2 e

Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 5:09 PM

To: President of The Hebrew University 5.1 lid 2 e

Cc: 5.1 lid 2 e

Subject: Request for call

Dear President Cohen,

Almost a year ago we had an online meeting in which I discussed with you the development of a human rights due diligence framework to be applied to all Maastricht University's partners throughout the world.

After a careful process, the framework was developed and adopted by

the Executive Board and the deans. Overall, we approach our global engagement with countries and partners where human rights are under pressure with “yes, we collaborate, unless we have major concerns”. At the same time, we find it important that Maastricht University itself and our institutional strategic partners are not contributing in any way to serious violations of human rights or international crimes.

I am writing to let you know that – in line with this policy - our Human Rights Advisory Committee is currently starting to assess our institutional strategic partnerships in a number of countries or regions where there are significant signals that such violations take place, including but not limited to Israel. This includes an HRDD assessment of the partnership we have.

Given that your institution has been a valued partner to us, I would like to personally discuss the background to our assessment with you, if possible. Would you be willing to schedule a phone call so that we can discuss the aim of the assessment and our further process, and for you to share any concerns you may have on our evaluation process? Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rianne Letschert

Prof.dr. Rianne Letschert
President

5.1 lid 2 e

From: Letschert, Rianne (CVB)
To: 5.1 lid 2 e
Cc:
Subject: Draft advice partnership Enspire – Maastricht University (C25.01466_RB)
Date: donderdag 18 september 2025 10:49:54
Attachments: Phase 2 Israel-Palestine report Enspire.pdf
Phase 1 report Israel-Palestine.pdf
image001.jpg
image002.jpg
image003.jpg
image004.jpg
image005.jpg
image006.jpg

Dear 5.1 lid 2 e,

Thank you very much for our talk on 16 July, when we discussed the start of a human rights assessment of our institutional strategic partner institutions, including Enspire, by Maastricht University's Human Rights Advisory Committee. The aim of our assessment was to ensure that (Maastricht University itself and) our partners are not contributing to serious violations of human rights.

Our committee has now delivered its preliminary advice. It has concluded that there is no evidence that Enspire is involved in any of the issues that would raise concern under our Human Rights Due Diligence framework, and that Maastricht University can continue to collaborate with Enspire.

As promised in our meeting, I have attached our committee's full preliminary advice on your company (i.e. the Phase 2 Israel/Palestine report Enspire) and our Phase 1 country report in order to give you the opportunity to respond. If you have any comments, please let me know by 3 October.

After 3 October, our committee will finalise its advice, and based on this, the Maastricht University Executive Board will take a decision on our partnership. I will let you know our decision in the second half of October.

With very best wishes,

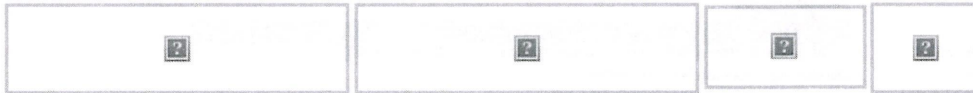
Rianne Letschert



Prof.dr. Rianne Letschert
Bestuursvoorzitter/ President

5.1 lid 2 e

[Redacted signature block]



Disclaimer



Please consider your environmental responsibility before printing this e-mail.

From: Letschert, Rianne (CVB)
To: 5.1 lid 2 e
Cc: 5.1 lid 2 e
Subject: Draft advice partnership HUJI - Maastricht University (C25.01465_RB)
Date: donderdag 18 september 2025 10:46:17
Attachments: Phase 2 Israel-Palestine report HUJI.pdf
Phase 1 report Israel-Palestine.pdf
image001.jpg
image002.jpg
image003.jpg
image004.jpg
image005.jpg
image006.jpg

Dear 5.1 lid 2 e

Thank you very much for your message.

On 9 July, I informed you of the fact that our Human Rights Advisory Committee was about to start an assessment of our institutional strategic partnerships in a number of countries or regions where there are significant signals that serious human rights violations take place, including but not limited to Israel. This includes an HRDD assessment of the partnership we have.

Maastricht University's Human Rights Advisory Committee has now completed its preliminary fact finding and human rights assessment of our institutional strategic partner institutions in Israel, including Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI). The aim of our assessment was to ensure that (Maastricht University itself and) our partners are not contributing to serious violations of human rights.

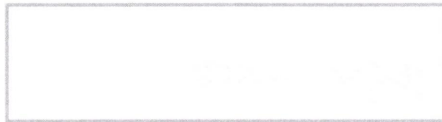
According to the steps in our Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) framework, we invite our partners to respond to the committee's preliminary advice, that was drafted after a careful fact finding mission. With this step, we would like to give our partners the opportunity to share their views regarding the current preliminary advice. The committee then takes this information into consideration before finalising the advice, after which our Executive Board takes a final decision.

As promised, I have attached our committee's full preliminary advice on HUJI (i.e. the Phase 2 Israel-Palestine Report HUJI) and our Phase I country report, in order to give you the opportunity to respond before the advice will be finalised. We invite you to share your views on the preliminary advice, including – but not limited to – any relevant information that has not been sufficiently taken into account in the committee's findings or any information that is factually incorrect in your view, by 3 October. We will then ask our committee to consider any additional facts that you have submitted.

After 3 October, our committee will finalise its advice, and based on this, the Maastricht University Executive Board will take a decision on our partnership. I will let you know our decision in the second half of October.

With very best wishes,

Rianne Letschert



Prof.dr. Rianne Letschert
Bestuursvoorzitter/ President
Professor international law and victimology

5.1 lid 2 e

[Redacted text block]



Disclaimer



Please consider your environmental responsibility before printing this e-mail.

From: Letschert, Rianne (CVB)
To: 5.1 lid 2 e
Cc: 5.1 lid 2 e
Subject: Draft advice partnership Rabin Medical Center – Maastricht University (C25.01467_RB)
Date: donderdag 18 september 2025 10:58:55
Attachments: Phase 2 Israel-Palestine report RMC.pdf
Phase 1 report Israel-Palestine.pdf
image001.jpg
image002.jpg
image003.jpg
image004.jpg
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Dear 5.1 lid 2 e

On 18 August, we had brief email contact, after I informed you about the fact that Maastricht University's Human Rights Advisory Committee would start a human rights assessment of our institutional strategic partner institutions, including Rabin Medical Center (RMC). The aim of our assessment was to ensure that (Maastricht University itself and) our partners are not contributing to serious violations of human rights.

Our committee has now delivered its preliminary advice. I have attached our committee's full preliminary advice on your university (i.e. the Phase 2 Israel-Palestine report Rabin Medical Center) and our Phase 1 country report in order to give you the opportunity to respond. If you have any comments, please let me know by 3 October.

After 3 October, our committee will finalise its advice, and based on this, the Maastricht University Executive Board will take a decision on our partnership. I will let you know our decision in the second half of October.

With very best wishes,

Rianne Letschert



Prof.dr. Rianne Letschert
Bestuursvoorzitter/ President
Professor international law and victimology

5.1 lid 2 e
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]



[Disclaimer](#)



Please consider your environmental responsibility before printing this e-mail.

From: Letschert, Rianne (CVB) 5.1 lid 2 e

Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 11:25 AM

To: President of The Hebrew University 5.1 lid 2 e

Cc: 5.1 lid 2 e

Subject: Invitation for meeting | draft Advice partnership Hebrew University of Jerusalem – Maastricht University (C25.02560)

Dear 5.1 lid 2 e

I hope this message finds you well.

As part of our ongoing Human Rights Due Diligence assessment concerning our partnership, I shared the preliminary advice of Maastricht University's Human Rights Advisory Committee with you on 18 September. While the indicated deadline to provide a response has passed, we welcome the opportunity to hear your views.

To continue our dialogue, I would like to invite you to an online meeting on **Wednesday, 16 October, from 15:00 to 16:00 (CET)**.

To support a constructive conversation, I kindly request that you provide your written feedback of the draft report no later than **10 October**.

I anticipate a valuable discussion and hope that the scheduled time is workable for you.

With very best wishes,

<image007.jpg>

Prof.dr. Rianne Letschert
Bestuursvoorzitter/ President

Professor international law and victimology

5.1 lid 2 e

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Disclaimer

<image006.jpg>

Please consider your environmental responsibility before printing this e-mail.

6 Oct. 2025

To:

Prof. dr. Rianne Letschert
Bestuursvoorzitter/ President
Minderbroedersberg 4-6, 6211 LK Maastricht
P.O. Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht
The Netherlands

Dear Prof. Letschert,

Re: Draft advice partnership HUJI - Maastricht University (C25.01465_RB)

Thank you for sharing with us the draft advice documents and affording us with the ability to respond to them.

As indicated in our email message to you of Sept. 14 2025, we have serious concerns about the methodology followed by your Human Rights Advisory Committee and its failure to effectively engage with the Hebrew University during the evidence gathering stage. These concerns have led us to request to meet the Committee before it completed its work. As we feared, the engagement with our Psychology Department had limited impact on the issues discussed in the draft advice, which mostly address activities in other departments and at the University as a whole. It is not surprising, as a result, that – lacking a proper consultation with us – we find many conclusions of the Committee to be partial, inaccurate and deficient in nuance and context. We are perplexed why such a sensitive process has been handled by your University with such lack of sensitivity, and with an incoherent approach towards engagement with us – the partner institution (that is, engaging with one department and not with the university as a whole).

We were also dismayed to see that the standard of review *de facto* applied by the Committee is far removed from the international standards of “directly linked” and “causing or contributing to gross human rights abuses” (see e.g., UN Guiding Principles, Principles 19 and 23). Instead, the Committee reached the conclusion that our institution is *indirectly* involved in serious international violations on the basis of three factors (involvement with the IDF, one archaeological project and “one side narrative”), which led the Committee to regard them as forms of support by our University of international law violations. We totally reject these allegations, as explained below, but even were these facts true, they still fall far short of meaningful *involvement* in gross human rights abuse. The draft advice does not show, and cannot show, that the Hebrew University has effectively contributed directly or indirectly to serious human rights violations, and adopts instead a much lower standard of guilt by association and/or lack of dissociation. Applied to your own University, this standard might implicate you too as an institution with all past, present and future violations of international human rights law and international environmental law by the Dutch government.

We will not engage with Phase One of the evaluation (which should not imply our agreement with the accuracy of the legal analysis offered there and the probative value of the different reports cited there). We accept, *arguendo*, for the purposes of this engagement, that serious violations of international law have occurred in the region, including by the Israeli government. The issue we focus on is the lack of involvement by the Hebrew University – an independent body of higher education and research – with these alleged violations.

Involvement with the IDF

Israeli universities, including the Hebrew University, operate several academic programs that enrol IDF servicemen and women. These programs are purely academic. The soldiers participate in regular academic degree programs alongside other Jewish and Palestinian students, with minimal interaction between the University and the army. The IDF does not interfere in academic affairs and the University does not provide any military training. Of course, the University also has nothing to do with military decisions in and outside of the current war. We consider these programs as having important benefits, as they provide IDF soldiers both with necessary tools for critical thinking and educate them about values of liberalism, human rights, and the importance of striving for peace. They also provide soldiers with an opportunity to study and interact with students of all fractions of society, including Palestinian students. This is why the University and the international friends of the University (which are separate legal entities from the University) have regarded these programs, as a source of pride and an important service we provide the larger Israeli society.

In addition, many of our students perform reserve duty. Contrary to what the draft advice suggests, such service is, as a rule, mandatory in nature. During the last two years, large numbers of our students have been called up for reserve service for extraordinary long periods of time, requiring the University to develop a host of specially-tailored solutions – academic, psychological and logistical to many practical problems encountered by these reservists, as well as by other students affected by the war – Jews and Arabs – such as those who lost family members or were evacuated from their homes due to the war and who received similar support solutions. Significantly, most of these support services are built upon pre-existing services and arrangements available to all students, confronting unique problems – evaluated on a case-by-case basis – including our many Palestinian students who are also traumatized by war (and are often facing also other socio-economic difficulties and Hebrew language proficiency problems), students who refuse to serve and experience difficulties as a result of their conscientious objection and students with health issues. The report cited in the draft advice – <https://campaign.huji.ac.il/help-university-community> – actually illustrates that support is extended to the entire university community affected by the crisis. We find the insinuation in the draft advice that the support we give our reservist students is a form of incentive to join the IDF and to commit international law violations an unacceptable comment bordering on libel. We also found incredible the insinuation that the fact that faculty and students volunteered in the chaotic first days of the war to a variety of war-related causes, including in grass roots organizations that sent food, clothes and basic equipment to evacuees and to hastily drafted reservists amounts to logistical support by the University itself to IDF operations. In sum, the University has no meaningful “involvement” – direct or indirect – in IDF operations, does not reward students for serving in the IDF and does not support operations by the IDF that violate international law.

Archaeological excavations

The draft advise mentions one excavation project in the West Bank – the *Fortress of Hyrcania* (an ancient Hashmonai fortress located in the Judea desert) – in which the university is involved. The Committee correctly notes that Israel is a party to the 1954 Hague Convention and that article 5 requires Israel to “*support the competent national authorities of the occupied territory in safeguarding and preserving [their] cultural property*”. Note, however, that this is a positive obligation imposed on the State of Israel, and does not extend to private actors, such as the Hebrew University (although the university would be delighted to work with Palestinian archaeological authorities and experts and has tried to do so in the past). The Committee does not mention in its draft advice that the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Accord divided competencies between the two parties – Israel and the PA – regarding archaeological excavations in the West Bank, and that unlike excavations in Areas A and B, excavations in Area C (which include the site of the fortress) remain – until transferred by future agreement – under Israeli responsibility and official supervision. With this legal framework of division of competencies, cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian archaeological authorities is currently undertaken.

The current excavations in Hyrcania, a site which has been excavated on and off since 1999 (building on previous efforts by private treasure hunters in 1960 and 1986), are salvage excavations designed to save this important archaeological site from irreversible harm. They have assumed a sense of urgency in recent years given the growing prevalence of antique thefts and vandalism of cultural sites in the region, and on the site in question itself, by a variety of Israeli and Palestinian actors. They are conducted on the basis of the highest scientific standards; and they are designed to preserve this important heritage site for Jews, Christians and Muslims, and to promote conditions that would facilitate safe public access to it for all. The University has no commercial interests in the excavation, and respects all applicable legal provisions and ethical standards relating to the excavation. We do not consider that the University’s involvement in this project can be reasonably described, under the circumstances, as an involvement in a serious violation of international law.

One sided narrative

We consider this allegation to be the most perplexing in the draft advice. Although the Hebrew University normally maintains political neutrality in its messaging, its leadership has taken in the last two years a non-trivial public stand against governmental statements and policies relating to the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. The five Presidents’ statement criticizing the government’s failure to maintain adequate humanitarian conditions in Gaza has been widely reported in Israeli media and in the University’s social media, and it adds to many other statements published on our website and social media outlets that call for a negotiated end to the war, resulting *inter alia* in the return of the Israel hostages (see e.g., <https://new.huji.ac.il/news/האוניברסיטה-העברית-קוראת-לממשלת-ישראל-עסקה-עכשיו>; https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/hebrew-u-joins-3-other-universities-in-announcing-participation-in-aug-17-general-strike/). To suggest that the university leadership (and the vast majority of our faculty – who oppose the war) has taken a pro-war stance is a great distortion of reality. In fact, the University leadership was subject to criticism by right-wing students, demonstrating in our campus for its alleged pro-Palestinian stance (see e.g., <https://www.srugim.co.il/1125012-%D7%90%D7%97%D7%A8%D7%99->

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%D7%A1%D7%A2%D7%A8%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%A0%D7%9B%D7%91%D7%94-
%D7%9E%D7%97%D7%90%D7%94-%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%A8%D7%AA-
%D7%91%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%A1%D7%99).

We are particularly concerned about the flimsy grounds on which the Committee's conclusion in this regard is based – the allusion in the university webpage to the hostage crisis. This is a point we consider to be obtuse and illustrative of complete lack of understanding of the country situation. Almost all Israelis have been united in calls to return the hostages, and this has been the main rallying cry in the massive “end the war” protests around the country and a central talking point of the political opposition to the government (who tends to downplay the hostage's crisis). Indeed, University leadership statements have explicitly made the connection between the two causes, calling on the government to reach a deal that returns the hostages and ends the war. Reading into such communication a pro-war sentiment is a gross misconstruction of the facts. In addition, we are compelled to note that one of students – 5.1 lid 2 e – was among the hostages who was murdered in captivity, and another hostage who was released earlier this year is the son of our faculty member – 5.1 lid 2 e. The hostage's crisis therefore affected us directly as a community, and we reject the suggestion that not mentioning other crimes on our website colours our institution as a whole as a one-sided entity.

In the same vein, the draft advice “finding” that no protest against the war is permitted on campus is plainly untrue. Protests are allowed in the University as a matter of law and practice, and do often take place, including at the initiative of Arab student bodies – as the following news items illustrate (including a discussion of the public safety challenges some demonstrations pose and university efforts to balance the right to peaceful assembly with public order requirements) -

https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/symtqvxxv0#google_vignette

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/2025-04-08/ty-article/.highlight/00000196-14e5-d93f-a7f7-5eefc8620000>

<https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/local/880758/>

<https://www.israelhayom.co.il/magazine/hashavua/article/17966271>

I will not proceed to discuss other minor points raised in the draft advice, but I hope the thrust of our position has been clarified. The Hebrew University aspires to meet the highest scientific and ethical standard, and its accusation of involvement in serious violations of international law is baseless. It reflects more on the deficiencies of the process you have set in place than on us.

I hope your Board will do the right thing, in view of these comments, and reject the recommendation to freeze our partnership.

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5.1 lid 2 e

HRAC Response to HUJI Letter

To the Executive Board

The Human Rights Advisory Committee acknowledges the reply to our draft report from Hebrew University Jerusalem, and appreciates its engagement with the HRDD process.

We have made limited minor clarificatory alterations to our report in response (see pages 5, 7 and 8, with regard to the Presidents' letter, student protests and the context in which HUJI operates), but our overall advice is unchanged. In the following text we address several inconsistencies and omissions in the reply, and indicate why our conclusions are unaltered.

We recommend that the Board focus its discussions with HUJI on the future, and more specifically on the conditions under which we might resume collaboration.

1. Basis for HRDD concern: indirect involvement in international crimes

The Committee reiterates that its assessment concluded HUJI is indirectly involved in serious international violations on the basis of three key factors:

1. HUJI's involvement with the Israeli military (including formal education programs for IDF units),
2. HUJI's participation in an archaeological excavation in occupied territory,
3. The consistent promotion of a one-sided historical narrative.

These findings are consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). HUJI's reply mischaracterises the applicable standard under the UNGPs. According to Principle 13, business enterprises have a responsibility not only to avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts, but also to address impacts they are directly linked to through business relationships, even where they have not contributed to them. Specifically:

“The responsibility to respect human rights requires that business enterprises:
(a) Avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, and address such impacts when they occur;
(b) Seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts.” (UNGP Principle 13)

The Commentary to Principle 13 clarifies that:

“Business enterprises may be involved with adverse human rights impacts either through their own activities or as a result of their business relationships with other parties.”

This includes State or non-State actors that are directly linked to their operations, and further explains that:

“‘Business relationships’ are understood to include relationships with business partners, entities in its value chain, and any other non-State or State entity directly linked to its business operations, products or services.”

In this case, HUJI’s educational and institutional cooperation with the IDF—an actor credibly accused of serious international crimes—places HUJI in a situation of indirect involvement. Its activities contribute structurally to the functioning of the IDF, including in operations that give rise to well-documented violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Principle 19 (which HUJI mentions in its reply), and its Commentary further address what an entity should do when it has not caused or contributed to an adverse human rights impact, but the impact is directly linked to its operations, products or services by a business relationship with another entity. The Commentary acknowledges the complexity of such situations:

“Where a business enterprise has not contributed to an adverse human rights impact, but that impact is nevertheless directly linked to its operations, products or services by its business relationship with another entity, the situation is more complex.”

In such cases, a range of factors must guide the enterprise’s response:

“Among the factors that will enter into the determination of the appropriate action in such situations are the enterprise’s leverage over the entity concerned, how crucial the relationship is to the enterprise, the severity of the abuse, and whether terminating the relationship with the entity itself would have adverse human rights consequences.”

Moreover, the Commentary continues:

“There are situations in which the enterprise lacks the leverage to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts and is unable to increase its leverage. Here, the enterprise should consider ending the relationship, taking into account credible assessments of potential adverse human rights impacts of doing so.”

In the present case, HUJI’s institutional relationship with the Israeli military—including educational programs directly serving military intelligence and other IDF units—creates a direct linkage between HUJI’s operations and ongoing international crimes committed by the IDF, as documented in the Committee’s Phase I findings. Under the UNGPs, HUJI bears responsibility to assess and address this linkage, including distancing itself from contributing structures and relationships.

If HUJI fails to take such steps, then under the same principles, Maastricht University must assess its own relationship with HUJI accordingly. Given the limited leverage UM

has, the severity of the violations involved, and the minimal human rights benefit derived from maintaining the relationship (given the small number of affected students), the Committee concluded that the appropriate course under the HRDD Framework is to end the institutional relationship with HUJI.

2. Omission regarding military programs

Regrettably, HUJI's reply does not engage with the section of the report that documents the university's formal educational programs for IDF personnel, which are a central concern.

These include:

- The Havatzalot program, which trains IDF military intelligence officers on campus. These officers wear uniforms on campus and live in segregated housing under biometric surveillance (Report, p. 3).
- The Talpiot program, which provides technological and scientific training for IDF recruits.

This involvement is explicitly cited as the first ground in the Committee's conclusion that:

"As an institution, they are indirectly involved in such actions because of their involvement with the IDF." (Report, p. 8)

The reply does not dispute this involvement nor provide any rationale for its continuation in light of the serious international crimes committed by the IDF.

3. Archaeological excavations in occupied territory

The report raised concerns about HUJI's participation in archaeological excavations in the occupied West Bank, conducted in partnership with Carson-Newman University and American Veterans Archaeological Recovery. These excavations appear to have taken place without the consent or involvement of the competent Palestinian authorities.

This raises clear concerns under international humanitarian law, particularly Article 5 of the 1954 Hague Convention, which obliges the occupying power:

"as far as possible, [to] support the competent national authorities of the occupied country in safeguarding and preserving its cultural property."

The ICJ Advisory Opinion of 2024 reaffirmed that Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful and that it must respect the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. In this context, archaeological projects undertaken by Israeli institutions without consultation or consent from Palestinian

heritage authorities may amount to a continuing violation of international law, and actively contribute to the violation of the right to self-determination.

4. Attribution and positive obligations

HUJI contends that the obligations arising from the Hague Convention fall upon Israel, not HUJI. However, this claim overlooks the fact that if Israel were properly implementing its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, it would prohibit or regulate excavations by Israeli institutions in occupied territory—ensuring coordination with Palestinian authorities. The absence of such regulation creates a situation where HUJI's excavations both triggers and sustains violations of Israel's international obligations.

In this context, HUJI's involvement cannot be considered passive or incidental—it contributes to the material breach of international humanitarian law.

5. Misplaced reliance on the Oslo II Accord

The reply invokes the 1995 Oslo II Accord to justify aspects of HUJI's conduct in the occupied West Bank. However, the ICJ Advisory Opinion (2024) explicitly addresses this argument. The Court held that:

“In interpreting the Oslo Accords, it is necessary to take into account Article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which provides that the protected population ‘shall not be deprived’ of the benefits of the Convention ‘by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power’.” (para. 102)

Accordingly, the Court concluded that the Oslo Accords cannot be relied upon to justify breaches of international humanitarian law or derogations from obligations owed to the Palestinian population under occupation.

6. Lack of evidence of engagement with Palestinian authorities

Finally, HUJI claims it “would be delighted to work with Palestinian archaeological authorities and experts and has tried to do so in the past.” However, no concrete evidence is provided in support of this assertion. At minimum, meaningful consultation with the Palestine Authority would be a baseline indicator of such engagement. In the absence of such evidence, the claim remains unsubstantiated.



**SIMON
WIESENTHAL
CENTER**

Prof. Dr. Pamela Habibović
Rector Magnificus
Maastricht University
Minderbroedersberg 4–6
6211 LK Maastricht
The Netherlands

October 20, 2025

Dear Rector Habibović,

We write to express our profound concern and strong opposition to Maastricht University's reported decision to suspend academic collaborations with Israeli universities pending the outcome of your Human Rights and Conflict Zones assessment process.

This measure, taken under the framework of your human-rights due-diligence policy, represents a troubling and discriminatory step that singles out Israeli institutions under the pretext of ethical review. We urge you and the Executive Board to rescind this suspension and reaffirm that political or ideological campaigns will not dictate Maastricht University's academic partnerships.

The selective focus on Israel stands in stark contrast to Maastricht University's many active and valued partnerships with universities in countries whose governments face serious and well-documented human-rights concerns. For example:

- [REDACTED] buiten scope
- [REDACTED]
- Other international partners – Collaborations in various regions proceed uninterrupted despite ongoing state repression, restrictions on academic freedom, and conflicts that have produced far graver humanitarian tolls than anything attributable to Israel.

The decision to freeze or suspend cooperation with Israeli universities—while partnerships with the above mentioned countries remain intact—betrays a double standard. It undermines the credibility of Maastricht's ethical framework and risks normalising tactics associated with the BDS movement, which are widely recognised, including under the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, as crossing into discriminatory treatment of the world's only Jewish state.



Moreover, we urge you to take into account the fact that reputable global indices confirm that Israel, for all its challenges and while fighting entities devoted to its destruction, is a robust democracy in comparative perspective:

- Freedom House 2025 rates Israel 73 / 100 ("Free")—the only state in the Middle East to attain the organisation's highest freedom category and ranking ahead of several EU members on civil-liberties and political-rights scores, such as Hungary or Bulgaria.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit's 2024 Democracy Index assigns Israel a score of 7.68 / 10, ranking 31st out of 167 countries and classifying it as a "flawed democracy"—yet still higher than Greece, Hungary, and numerous other partners with which Maastricht University maintains exchange agreements.

Why, then, would Maastricht University suspend cooperation with Israeli universities while continuing collaborations with institutions in countries ranking significantly lower on measures of democracy and freedom? Such inconsistency undermines the stated goals of your human-rights policy and threatens to politicize academic inquiry.

True ethical consistency demands that all partnerships undergo the same scrutiny, not the selective isolation of the world's only Jewish state.

We respectfully urge you to reverse the suspension of cooperation with Israeli universities and reaffirm Maastricht University's role as a beacon of unbiased scholarship and international dialogue.

With sincere regards,

5.1 lid 2 e

5.1 lid 2 e

VERTROUWELIJK

Aan: CvB
Van: 5.1 lid 2 e
Inzake: UM HRAC "Phase 2 Partner Assessment Report:
Israel/Palestine" d.d. 13 oktober 2025
d.d.: 20 oktober 2025

1. Aanleiding

Onderstaand mijn observaties bij het conceptadvies van 13 oktober van de UM Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC) aan het CvB. Deze observaties zijn gebaseerd op:

- het "HRDD Phase 1 Country Assessment Report: Israel/Palestine", conceptadvies HRAC aan het CvB van 20 mei 2025;
- het "HRDD Phase 2 Partner Assessment Report: Israel/Palestine", conceptadvies HRAC aan het CvB van 13 oktober 2025;
- de reactie van de Rector van Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) op een eerder hem toegezonden concept van de HRAC, gericht aan de bestuursvoorzitter UM d.d. 6 oktober 2025;
- de zienswijze van de HRAC op de reactie van de Rector HUJI, neergelegd in een apart document van de HRAC aan het CvB (zonder datum).

NB Ik had geen inzage in de samenwerkingsovereenkomsten tussen UM en de drie onderzochte partners.

Aan de orde komen achtereenvolgens het advies van de HRAC over HUJI (2), de verhouding met adviezen van adviescommissies van andere Nederlandse universiteiten (3), de mogelijke invloed van het recente "20-puntenplan" (4), de mogelijke consequenties (precedentwerking) van het advies op samenwerking met partners in andere landen (5). Een apart punt betreft recente ontwikkelingen rondom EU-Horizon-projecten (6). Ten slotte iets over de adviezen inzake Rabin Medical Center (RMC) en Enspire (7) en wat losse observaties (8).

2. Het advies over HUJI in het licht van het UM-kader

2.1 Het UM-kader (HRDDAF)

Het UM Human Rights Due Diligence Assessment Framework (24 februari 2025; HRDDAF) bevat in deel II (HRDD Partner Assessment Tool) het kader voor de beoordeling van institutionele samenwerkingen van de UM: dit kader geeft:

- a. een criterium voor de beoordeling. Dit is: bestaan er "serious indications of whether a partner is involved in international crimes or serious violations of human rights";
- b. een overzicht van de mogelijke besluiten naar aanleiding van het advies: "continue, temporarily put on hold, end, renew or (not) start a partnership."

Het criterium van de "involvement" is uitgewerkt in drie subvragen:

1. a. "Has the partner been convicted for international crimes and/or serious violations of human rights?; b. Are there indications that the partner is/has been, involved in such violations?"
2. Are there (one or more) indications that the partner is involved with the military or in warfare, such as controversial weapon development, and thereby contributing to violations of international law?
3. If the answer to one or both of the previous questions is 'yes', what is the level of involvement in such violations of the partner?"

Indien dit op een continuüm een lage mate van betrokkenheid is, worden impact en gevolgen daarvan beoordeeld; indien er een hoge mate van betrokkenheid is (meer directe betrokkenheid), wordt het partnerschap beëindigd.

2.2 Observaties bij het concept-advies HRAC van 13 oktober

- 5.2, 5.1 lid 2 i

1. *Journal of Management Studies*, 1996, 33, 1, 1-15.

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

Figure 1. The effect of the concentration of the inhibitor on the rate of polymerization of α -methylstyrene in the presence of SnCl_4 at 25°C .

© 2000 Blackwell Science Ltd *Journal of Internal Medicine* 247: 395–401

1. **Introduction**

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1. *Journal of Management Education*, 30(1), 10-20.

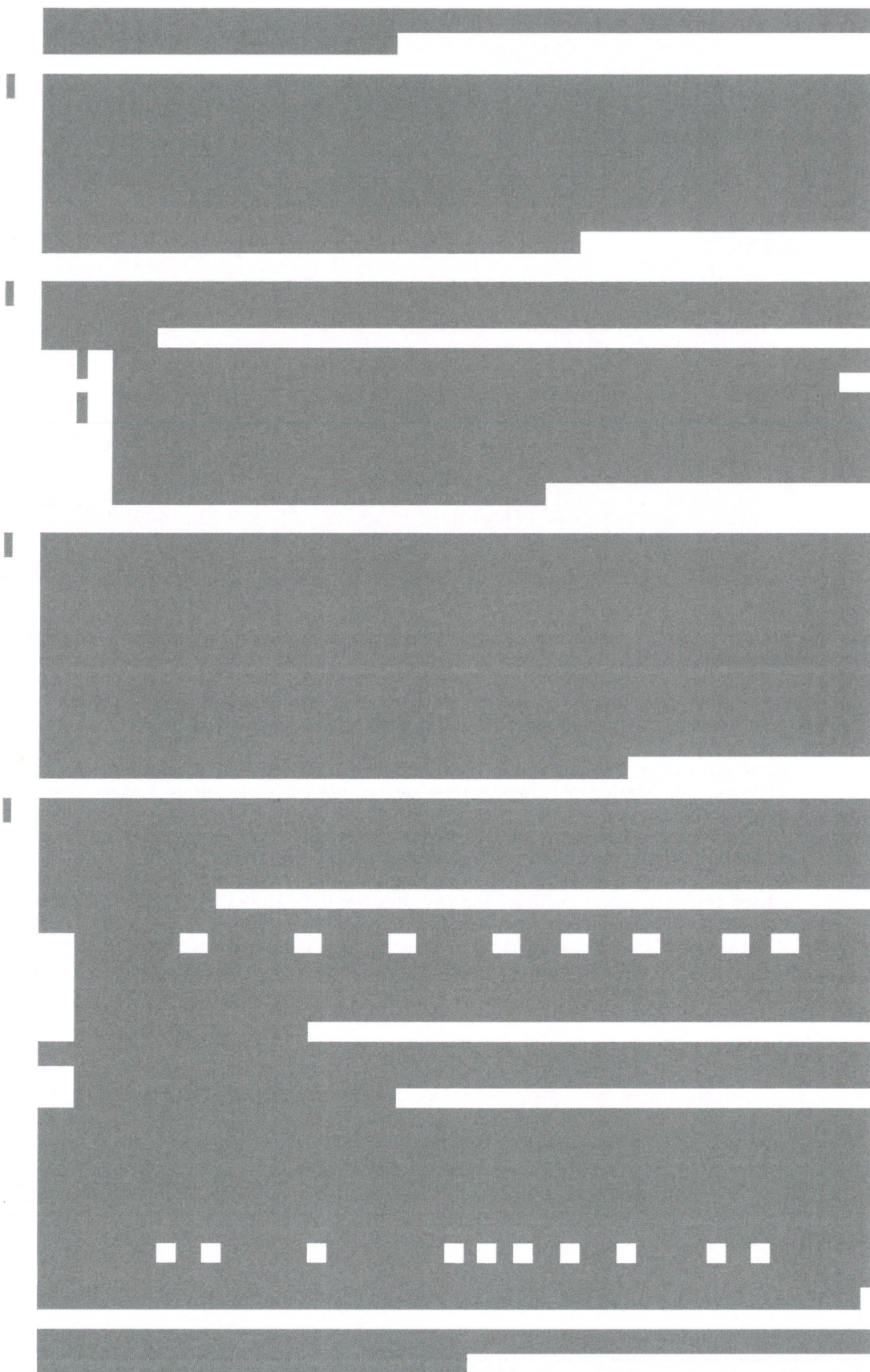
1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2000; 283: 2686-2692.

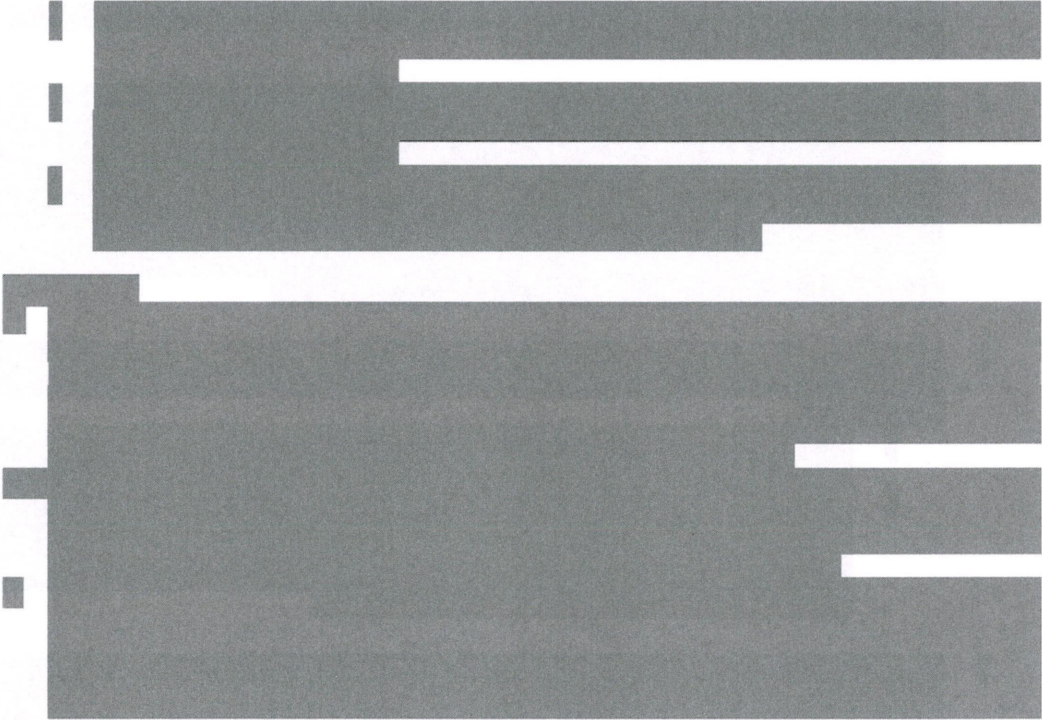
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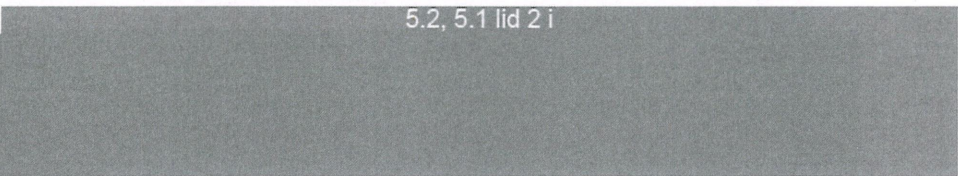


3. Verhouding met adviezen van adviescommissies van andere Nederlandse universiteiten

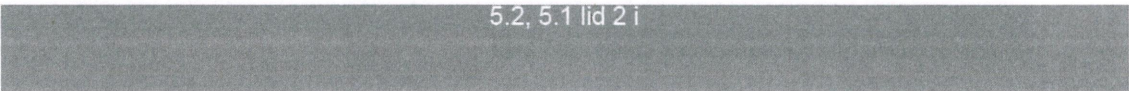
De adviezen van soortgelijke adviescommissies van Nederlandse universiteiten over de samenwerking met HUJI wijzen in dezelfde richting als dit voorgenomen besluit:

- Adviescommissie Samenwerking met derden Universiteit van Amsterdam (maart 2025): advies om de afgelopen studentenuitwisseling met HUJI niet te verlengen (overgenomen door het CvB);
- Adviescommissie Samenwerkingsverbanden Radboud Universiteit (maart 2025): advies om de samenwerking op te schorten (overgenomen door het CvB);
- Adviescommissie Gevoelige Samenwerkingsverbanden Erasmus Universiteit (mei 2025): advies om op te schorten (overgenomen door het CvB, althans CvB heeft 'bevroren');
- Commissie Externe Samenwerkingen Universiteit Leiden (juli 2025): advies om studentenuitwisseling met HUJI op te schorten (overgenomen door het CvB);
- Universiteit Utrecht: studentenuitwisseling met HUJI liep in 2023 af zodat (bij mijn weten) geen toets is uitgevoerd.

4. Invloed van het recente staakt-het-vuren

In mijn optiek  5.2, 5.1 lid 2 i

5. Precedentwerking van het advies op samenwerking met partners in andere landen

 5.2, 5.1 lid 2 i

[Redacted]

6. EU-Horizon-projecten

5.2, 5.1 lid 2 i
[Redacted]

7. De adviezen van de HRAC over Rabin Medical Center (RMC) en Enspire

Onderzoekssamenwerking tussen Rabin Medical Center (RMC) en departement biochemie FHML

5.2, 5.1 lid 2 i
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Samenwerking tussen Enspire en GROW FHML inzake hulp bij verkrijgen EU-financiering

5.2, 5.1 lid 2 i
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

8. Overige observaties

6 5.2, 5.1 lid 2 i
[Redacted]

Final Draft, 23rd October 2025

HRDD Phase 2 Partner Assessment Report: Israel/Palestine

Submitted to the Executive Board by the Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC)

Section 1. Introduction

The HRAC phase 1 HRDD report on Israel/Palestine concluded that there are serious indications that Israel has committed and continues to commit international crimes and serious human rights violations, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and potential acts of genocide. This phase 2 report sets out our assessment of Maastricht University's (UM's) institutional strategic partnership in Israel/Palestine (with Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and provides recommendations on this partner to the Executive Board. Section 3 describes considerations regarding Ministries, State Organs, and the Status of Public Universities in Israel. The Committee notes that UM currently does not have any strategic partnerships with any Palestinian institutions. For this reason, the report includes assessment only of our Israeli partner.¹

Section 2. Partnership with Hebrew University of Jerusalem

1. General introduction

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem is a large university: 23,500 students (from 66 countries); 6000 academic and administrative staff;² roughly similar in size to Maastricht University. It ranks nr. 281 in the QS world University Rankings 2025 (Maastricht University ranks nr. 230).³

HUJI's "international involvement" is listed on its website: "[HUJI] has signed 150 agreements for joint projects with other universities and 25 agreements for student exchanges with 14 countries."⁴ Maastricht University is no longer identified as an exchange destination,⁵ and otherwise only identified as a partner in an ERASMUS+ project within ASPHER that ended in 2024.⁶

¹ The Human Rights Advisory Committee initially included two other partners for analysis (Rabin Medical Centre and Enspire), but after further examination concluded that these were not institutional strategic partnerships. Accordingly, our report does not provide analysis of these two institutions. Researchers considering collaboration with colleagues from these (or other Israel-based) institutions may approach the committee for guidance.

² <https://en.huji.ac.il/university-numbers>, accessed 16 June 2025.

³ <https://www.topuniversities.com/world-university-rankings?countries=il>, accessed 16 June 2025.

⁴ See footnote 2.

⁵ Current list, archived version of Dec. 26, 2024.

⁶ [HUJI description](#) of the "Sharing European Educational Experience in Public Health for Israel" (SEEEPHI), accessed Sep. 10, 2025. [Project overview at ASPHER](#), accessed Sep. 10, 2025.

2. Partnership under consideration

In 2017, UM and HUJI, specifically the UM Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience (FPN) and the HUJI Department of Psychology, engaged in a student exchange agreement, establishing an exchange program for students, with the aim of allowing students of both universities to “gain international experience, enhance academic and research opportunities, and promote greater cultural understanding”.⁷ The agreement is open to two students per year (if each stay one semester), and explicitly excludes any financial transaction between the two institutions.⁸

The agreement was initially for 5 years with the possibility of extension. The exchange program remained active until it was frozen by UM in spring 2024.

3. Potentially problematic aspects, in terms of serious human rights violations, and/or international crimes.

In our analysis of the HUJI we found a number of potentially problematic practices at the university related to serious human rights violations, and/or international crimes.

Relation to the Israeli military (IDF)

The university has active connections with the IDF. As concluded in our phase 1 report, the IDF is actively involved in serious human rights violations and international crimes, including potential acts of genocide.⁹ Therefore, these connections are problematic. We have found multiple instances of direct support provided to IDF by HUJI.

First, HUJI has set up a support program for students who are active IDF reservists. Reservist military service is mandatory for many Israeli citizens after completion of mandatory military service, and as reservist they can be, and are, called upon to serve in active reservist duty. However, it is possible to refuse to serve, which many thousands (estimates fluctuate between 15,000 – 100,000) are currently doing. Refusing active reserve duty usually has no consequences or, in rare cases, means one has to spend a short period in prison.¹⁰ Through the support program at HUJI, reservists can receive

⁷ 2017 Student Exchange Agreement between UM and HUJI, p. 1.

⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

⁹ See HRAC report phase 1 on Israel/Palestine.

¹⁰ Staff, T. (2025) “Army reservist reportedly jailed for refusing to serve in West Bank, Gaza”, *The Times of Israel*, 12 May 2025. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/army-reservist-reportedly-jailed-for-refusing-to-serve-in-west-bank-gaza/>, accessed 27 June 2025; Harel, A. (2024) “Refusal to serve in the Israel Defense Forces reserves in an era of anti-democratic judicial reform”, *Critical Military Studies* 10(4): 562-567; Rapoport, M. (2025) “The Israeli army is facing its biggest refusal crisis in decades”, *+972 Magazine* April 11, 2025. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-army-refusal-crisis-gaza-war/>, accessed 27 June 2025; Margalit, R. (2025) “The Israeli Soldiers who refuse to fight in Gaza”, *The New Yorker* May 14, 2025. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-israeli-soldiers-who-refuse-to-fight-in-gaza>, accessed 27 June 2025.

financial support, credit reduction and passing grades, as well as other types of measures making it easier for these students to pass their studies (e.g. extra time for exams, easing mandatory attendance requirements). These include special measures for injured reservists.¹¹

We recognize the need to support injured students (no matter the cause of their injury), in line with their human rights. However, the provision of credit reduction and financial support go above and beyond the duty of care, towards pro-active support of students engaging in military action. It is extraordinary that students are able to skip meeting program-level ILOs solely through participation in active military service with no limitation indicated on the kinds of courses being passed without assessment. This provides a concrete reward to students who join the IDF and engage in military actions, including those actions in violation of international law (see phase 1 report). These rewards are not available to students engaged in any other form of extra-curricular activity, or undergoing other special circumstances. Relatedly, HUJI does not provide institutional support to those refusing to serve in the IDF.

Second, various military education programs for the IDF are taught at HUJI, including the Havatzalot program which educates IDF military intelligence officers, and for which “the officers in training will wear their uniforms on campus and have separate living quarters monitored by security cameras and that can only be entered with a biometric pass”,¹² and the Talpiot program which teaches military technological expertise.¹³

Third, the HUJI indicates that they “provide diverse logistics equipment to several military units” - this is presented by the university as a positive contribution to the military effort.¹⁴

According to the “Australian friends of the Hebrew University” (an association that raises funding and awareness for HUJI), “The Hebrew University is not only Israel’s first and foremost university but it is also the university that has the most important ties and

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<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%94%D7%A7%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%AA%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%90%D7%A7%D7%93%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA>, accessed 16 June 2025.

¹² <https://www.jta.org/quick-reads/hebrew-universitys-new-army-intelligence-program-not-welcomed-by-all>, accessed 18 June 2025.

¹³ We are much indebted to our colleagues at Radboud University Nijmegen for their analysis on this point. See Buydens, L, Leijenhorst, C., Bovend’Eert, P & Kole, J. (2025) “Advies aangaande de samenwerking met Hebrew University of Jerusalem International”, p.8. Additional sources: <https://austfhu.org.au/hebrew-university-partners-with-idf-to-offer-prestigious-academic-military-program-for-intelligence-corps-officers/>, accessed 18 June 2025; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2019-04-14/ty-article/.premium/hebrew-university-to-host-israeli-army-base-on-campus/0000017f-dbe6-d856-a37f-ffe6bf330000>, accessed 18 June 2025; <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/jerusalem-hebrew-university-to-host-military-intelligence-program-586822>, accessed 18 June 2025.

¹⁴ <https://campaign.huji.ac.il/help-university-community>, accessed 23 June 2025; Report on Israeli-Dutch academic ties, p. 8.

collaboration with the Israel Defence Force [hereafter: IDF]”. They share a list of ties between HUJI and the IDF.¹⁵

Relation to the illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem

We are also concerned regarding how the HUJI relates to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine (the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem),¹⁶ particularly because the HUJI website publicly advertises their ongoing archaeological research in the West Bank.¹⁷ A [press release](#) and [YouTube video](#) clearly identify the location of archaeological work at the Fortress of Hyrcania located within the West Bank.¹⁸ Israel, as a signatory of the 1954 Hague Convention, is required by art. 5 to “support the competent national authorities of the occupied territory in safeguarding and preserving [their] cultural property.” This project concerns a collaboration between HUJI, Carson-Newman University, and American Veterans Archeological Recovery, and we have not seen any indication that Palestinian authorities were consulted and/or have approved this project.¹⁹

In addition, we note that there has been a debate regarding the location of the HUJI Mount Scopus campus, and whether or not this is located outside the 1967 green line, in Palestine.²⁰ However, we find that the evidence is inconclusive and are not in a position to make a judgment on this matter based on the evidence available.

Repression of voices critical of serious human rights violations, international crimes and potential genocide

We are aware of one case where a law professor, Prof. Shalhoub-Kevorkian, was called on by the rector of HUJI “to resign in late 2023 after she signed a letter calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and describing Israel’s campaign as genocide, and she was briefly suspended over the podcast cited in her interrogation”.²¹ This case raised concerns about academic freedom at HUJI (a possible human rights violation). However, this

¹⁵ <https://austfhu.org.au/when-duty-calls-the-hebrew-university-is-always-there/>, accessed 18 June 2025.

¹⁶ REF ICJ / see also phase 1 report.

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gz8ybgXQSwQ&t=1s>, accessed 25 May 2025.

¹⁸ Geolocation notes available on request.

¹⁹ In general, issues numerous issues surrounding Israel archeological projects in the West Bank have been well documented. Maastricht University should be wary of such issues when assessing any Israeli academic partner involved in archeological projects. See: <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2024/10/03/israeli-archaeology-bill-raises-fears-of-west-bank-annexation>, accessed 22 June 2025;

<https://emekshaveh.org/en/about-us/>, accessed 22 June 2025; Report on Israeli-Dutch academic ties, p. 37

²⁰ Reference to reports Nijmegen and Amsterdam?

²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/26/political-arrest-palestinian-academic-nadera-shalhoub-kevorkian-israel-civil-liberties-threat>, accessed 27 June 2025;

<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2023-10-29-hebrew-university-of-jerusalem/>, accessed 27 June 2025; Report on Israeli-Dutch academic ties, p. 8.

situation led to protests,²² it appears to be an isolated incident, and we found no indications of any other such incidents.²³

Presentation of a one-sided narrative that supports the Israeli government's international crimes

Since there is ample evidence on the important role played by narrative in relation to (armed) conflict and other forms of human rights violations,²⁴ and because universities are authoritative actors in society that contribute to the creation of narratives, we find it relevant to consider the role the partner plays in this respect.

HUJI has not taken any official position in relation to the war. There has been no statement either condemning or supporting the Israeli government's international crimes as detailed in the phase 1 report, nor supporting them. Very recently the presidents of 5 Israeli universities did publish an open letter to president Netanyahu, condemning the immorality of "the cruel and indiscriminate harm being done by Israel to non-combatant men, women, and children", ministers and members of the Knesset advocating for the intentional destruction of Gaza and the forced displacement of its civilian population".²⁵ However, this letter was not published on the HUJI website. One could argue that it is important that the university remains neutral on topics that are so controversial in Israeli society, so that all students who hold different political views feel welcome. However, we find that the university in its public communication actually presents a one-sided narrative that supports the pro-war rhetoric of the Israeli government. For example:

- On the HUJI website homepage, there is a countdown for how long the hostages have been kidnapped by Hamas, but not the duration of the war, or how long Gazans have been without aid, or how many civilians have died in Gaza (to give some examples). There is a call to remember members of the Israeli military who died in Gaza, but no other victims of the war are mentioned.²⁶

²² <https://www.academia4equality.com/en/post/call-for-the-immediate-release-of-prof-nadera-shalhoub-kevorkian-and-the-termination-of-the-investi> accessed 25 June 2025.

²³ She is back to work at HUJI: <https://en.law.huji.ac.il/people/nadera-shalhoub-kevorkian>, accessed 25 June 2025.

²⁴ See for example Cobb, S. (2013) *Speaking of Violence: The Politics and Poetics of Narrative and Conflict Resolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Kvernbeek, T., & Bøe-Hansen, O. (2017). How to win wars: The role of the war narrative. In *Narration as argument* (pp. 215-234). Cham: Springer International Publishing;

²⁵ <https://english.tau.ac.il/presidents-letter-on-famine-in-gaza>, accessed 3 August 2025.

²⁶ <https://en.huji.ac.il/>.

- Official communications by the university board stress the need to bring back hostages ("there is no greater priority!"), but don't mention any other international crimes^{27 28}

As explained above, HUJI takes elaborate measures to support Israeli reservist military, yet no such measures exist (for example) for Israelis who refuse to enlist as eservists and therefore spend days in jail, or for Palestinian ("Arab") students who have family members in Gaza and are severely psychologically affected by witnessing their family members fighting starvation or fleeing from bombs.

Therefore, instead of being neutral, the institutional position and narrative presented by HUJI is a one-sided narrative that supports the international crimes being committed by the Israeli government, by stressing the victimhood of Israelis while ignoring the suffering of Palestinians.

4. Potentially positive aspects, in relation to the ongoing serious human rights violations, war crimes and international crimes.

In our analysis of HUJI, we found a number of potentially positive practices at the university related to serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes.

Our research gives the impression that, apart from the incident with Prof. Shalhoub-Kevorkian mentioned above, academic freedom is quite well protected at HUJI, including in relation to the currently ongoing serious human rights violations and international crimes. HUJI researchers express views and academic content in public, including in the media, from various perspectives. This includes HUJI scholars arguing in international media that "what is happening in Gaza does not need to resemble the Holocaust to qualify as genocide",²⁹ calls for peace,³⁰ and an opinion piece by Prof. David Enoch, addressing

²⁶

<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%94%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%98%D7%94-%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%AA-%D7%9C%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%A2%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%94-%D7%A2%D7%9B%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%95>

²⁸<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%94%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%98%D7%94-%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%AA-%D7%9C%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%A2%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%94-%D7%A2%D7%9B%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%95>,
<https://new.huji.ac.il/news/%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%98%D7%A4%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A2%D6%B8%D7%9D-%D7%9B%D6%BC%D6%B0%D7%9C%D6%B8%D7%91%D6%B4%D7%99%D7%90>,
<https://new.huji.ac.il/%D7%9E%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%95%D7%94-%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%91-%D7%97%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9D> , all accessed 3 August 2025.

²⁹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-undoubtedly-committing-genocide-holocaust-scholar-amos-goldberg> , accessed 27 June 2025.

³⁰ <https://archive.is/P1tKv#selection-295.10-297.102>), accessed 27 June 2025.

those who believe that it cannot true be that the IDF is engaged in war crimes.³¹ At the leadership level, we note that the HUJI rector expressed criticism of Israeli government cuts of funding for municipalities populated by Palestinians in Israel,³² a statement by the heads of Israeli universities including HUJI, stating that “we too mourn the loss of innocent life in this horrific conflict and want a better future for Palestinians and Israelis both”,³³ and the recent letter signed by the president, as mentioned above.

While we note with concern some signals that student protests do not seem to be allowed, and that the police intervenes in peaceful protests,³⁴ other sources indicate that various types of protest, with various political goals, are generally allowed by HUJI.³⁵ We particularly note the refusal of HUJI to comply with an order to share the personal details of all students of the sciences faculty, after one student allegedly damaged a water cannon of the police during a protest.³⁶

³¹ Enoch, D. (2024) „דמיינו איך תיראה פקודה לפשע מלחמה. עכשיו קראו את הפקודות שלפניכם”, *Haaretz* 27 October 2024. Also published on the unofficial HUIJ law blog: <https://www.hujilawblog.com/single-post/%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%95-%D7%91%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%95-%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%94-%D7%A4%D7%A9%D7%A2%D7%99-%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94-%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9A-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%99%D7%AA%D7%9D-%D7%99%D7%95%D7%93%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%96%D7%94>, accessed 27 June 2025.

³² <https://amp-cnn-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/amp.cnn.com/cnn/videos/world/2023/08/09/exp-080911aseg01-cnni-world-hebrew-univ-rector-israel-cuts-funding.cnn>, accessed 27 June 2025.

³³ https://international.huji.ac.il/israeli_university_heads_on_CRUE_statement, accessed 27 June 2025.

³⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/hebrew-u-student-protest-calls-for-end-of-war-in-gaza-stop-the-genocide/, accessed 27 June 2025; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-04-08/ty-article/.premium/hebrew-university-students-protest-gaza-war-despite-schools-attempt-to-cancel-rally/00000196-15d0-d23b-aff6-5fd05d8b0000>, accessed 27 June 2025; <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-palestinian-students-protest-at-hebrew-university-to-demand-end-to-gaza-war/3531797>, accessed 13 October 2025.

³⁵ <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel-at-war/artc-tensions-erupt-at-hebrew-university-as-students-clash-over-gaza>, accessed 8 October 2025; <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/pro-palestinian-students-protest-gaza-war-at-hebrew-university-in-jerusalem/3233075>, accessed 8 October 2025; <https://www.srugim.co.il/1125012-%d7%90%d7%97%d7%a8%d7%99-%d7%a1%d7%a2%d7%a8%d7%aa-%d7%94%d7%a0%d7%9b%d7%91%d7%94-%d7%9e%d7%97%d7%90%d7%94-%d7%a1%d7%95%d7%a2%d7%a8%d7%aa-%d7%91%d7%90%d7%95%d7%a0%d7%99%d7%91%d7%a8%d7%a1%d7%99>, accessed 13 October 2025.

³⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2025-04-24/ty-article/.premium/00000196-6636-daf5-a99f-f73ebaf40000>, accessed 8 October 2025; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-04-25/ty-article/.premium/university-ordered-to-hand-over-student-info-as-police-search-for-anti-govt-protester/00000196-6958-d4b3-a9df-7dfe79810000>, accessed 8 October 2025.

5. The HUJI psychology department

The UM partnership agreement is specifically with the psychology department of HUJI, a non-autonomous department. This department has a very strong academic track record. There are long standing and multiple connections with Dutch psychology.

At the department level, there is relatively little information available. On the website of the department, no problematic content related to the violations being studied was identified – in fact, there was no political content at all related to the war, occupation or international crimes. When looking at the faculty's website and social media, it is as if there is no war. The only mentions, in the "research in the headlines" section highlight the victimhood of the Israeli people.³⁷

The department does not operate any military programs. Studies in psychology are not part of the "Reservist tracks" educating students for the academic reserve. Contact with the department and consultations at UM give the impression that a number of department staff are engaged in protesting the war and in pro-human rights / peacebuilding research.³⁸ However, these activities are not part of the official policy of HUJI and are for example not advertised on its websites or social media channels, including the department website and channels.

6. Advice for the Executive Board

Based on the preceding considerations, the Committee concludes the following regarding HUJI.³⁹

HUJI is currently indirectly involved in serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes being committed by the Israeli government. As an institution, they are indirectly involved in such actions because of their involvement with the IDF, because of their archeological project in the West Bank, and the presentation of a one-sided narrative that supports the international crimes being committed by the Israeli government. While we acknowledge some positive actions undertaken by the university to protect human rights, as well as the fact that they are currently operating under very challenging

³⁷ Namely: on collective trauma since October 7th; anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder since October 7th; how the Israeli society deals with bereavement and grief following the war.

https://psychology.huji.ac.il/news/in_the_press, accessed 27 June 2025.

³⁸ E.g. The research of the chair of the department: <https://www.eranhalperin.com/>, and a podcast on how to stop groups from hating each other

https://open.spotify.com/episode/3OFvl80JfmHLs2KelwSpmu?si=d7c976184adb4acc&fbclid=IwY2xjawLLvXBleHRuA2FlbQlxMABicmlkETfIZ0dSMGhNRURmY2RxWmRIAR7hJWPJjv_O7oZ2O0VwBm5NaDsl199r8cdG5qeyXrRo-NxzRhFzWP3-WlpKJA_aem_hKvjOhtMBJeAzFgsfx8oBg&nd=1&dlsi=90e3f0acd5a24a15, accessed 27 June 2025.

³⁹ In our deliberations the Committee adhered to section 4.2.4 of our Working Principles, on ensuring impartiality.

circumstances, we still feel that the (support for) human rights violations as detailed above cross a line so serious that Maastricht University should not want to have any strategic partnerships with the HUJI (as an institution). Therefore, we **recommend that the current strategic institutional partnership should be suspended and no new partnerships should begin, until certain conditions are met.**

This means that all activities included in the partnership with HUJI should end fully, until certain conditions are met. The main reason for this recommendation is that the symbolism of a total block, in face of the serious human rights violations and international crimes being committed by the Israeli government (see report phase 1) and the involvement of HUJI in these crimes (report phase 2), sends the strongest message regarding the unacceptability of such crimes.

An additional element in the Executive Board's decision could be to stop outgoing students going to HUJI, while continuing to open our doors to *incoming students* as part of this student exchange. The main argument in favor of this position is twofold: First, this would make it possible for HUJI students to be exposed to alternative narratives and education at UM and in the Netherlands, compared to what they learn at HUJI and in the context of (current) life in Israel. Second, and more importantly, there would be positive symbolic value in keeping our doors open to HUJI students, to signal that all students are welcome and that we do not hold them responsible for the crimes of their government and/or university. This would be in line with the UM values of global citizenship, inclusion, and the UM ambition to be an "open and accessible community where all cultures, perspectives and ideas come together", that "welcome[s] talented people from all over the world".⁴⁰

We therefore advise taking the following concrete steps:

1. Inform HUJI that the partnership is suspended and share the HRAC reports (for phases 1 and 2) with HUJI leadership.
2. Inform HUJI that UM would consider restarting the partnership if it:
 - a. Ends all archeological projects in the West Bank.
 - b. Ends all collaboration with the Israeli military (IDF), for as long as the IDF is committing serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes.
 - c. Ends the special treatment of reserve soldiers who are also students by providing them with financial support and credit reduction, as long as the IDF is committing serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes.
 - d. Publicly distances itself from the crimes being committed by the Israeli government in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
3. Make the phase 1 and 2 reports public so that all UM staff and students considering collaboration with HUJI are properly informed.

⁴⁰ UM strategic programme 2022-2026, p. 25.

This advice can be reconsidered:

1. upon request by the University Board or Faculty leadership (there is a proponent);
2. in pursuit of a future strategic agreement (there is a concrete goal);
3. if the situation in Israel/Palestine has fundamentally improved or there is concrete evidence that HUJI has taken steps aligned with our expectations (concrete change in the situation).

Section 3. Legal and Institutional Considerations for HRDD Phase II Assessments in Israel-Palestine: Ministries, State Organs, and the Status of Public Universities

Given the phase 1 report findings, in the current context, the Committee advises against entering into or continuing partnerships with any organs of the Israeli State. While under domestic law, ministries and other public bodies are often constituted as separate legal persons, with their own rights and obligations, international law treats the State as a single legal entity.⁴¹ For the purpose of assessing institutional cooperation, the State is understood organically: its ministries, agencies, and public authorities are not isolated actors but constituent organs of one unified subject of international law. Accordingly, cooperation with a ministry—such as the Ministry of Health—cannot be meaningfully distinguished from cooperation with the State itself. Given the serious and well-documented violations currently attributed to the State of Israel, any such engagement would raise significant concerns under the HRDD Framework.

This analysis does not automatically extend to Israeli public universities, which—although publicly funded—generally operate with legal and administrative autonomy and are not considered organs of the State under international law. However, this status depends on context. Where a university acts under the direction or control of the State or participates in activities aligned with State policy—such as military collaborations or discriminatory practices—it may, in specific cases, be understood as contributing to the State’s conduct or objectives.

⁴¹ International Law Commission. (2001). *Draft articles on responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts*, Art. 4. UN Doc. A/56/49(Vol. I)/Corr.4; see also International Law Commission. (2001). *Draft articles on responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts, with commentaries*, p. 35, para. 6. UN Doc. A/56/10.

Appendix 1: Recommendations regarding the Blocklist and the Brightlist

The Human Rights Advisory Committee recommends that after the initial pilot phase of the Human Rights Due Diligence process, the Executive Board consider creating and formally publishing on the UM website two lists: a “**blocklist**” of partner institutions with whom we do not want to be associated because of their involvement in serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes; and a “**brightlist**” of partner institutions with whom we are proud to be in a partnership, because of their positive action against serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes, in countries where such violations occur.

(a) The Blocklist

The goal of the blocklist is to: a) motivate partner institutes to change their behaviour insofar as they are involved in international crimes; b) send a strong signal regarding the minimum expectations UM holds towards partner institutions (i.e. not to be involved in international crimes); c) provide information for individuals at UM considering partnership with these partners.

For institutions on the blocklist, this means that UM does not engage in any strategic partnerships with such institutions, unless they cease all involvement in serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes.

In cases where the partner institution is involved in serious human rights violations, war crimes and/or international crimes, so that they are on the blocklist, yet (some of) the activities resulting from the partnership contribute positively to the realisation of human rights, these activities could be exempted from the overall block of shared activities.

(b) The Brightlist

The goal of the brightlist is to: a) motivate and support partner institutes to take a positive and constructive role in the realisation of human rights, in particular in situations where this is challenging because of local circumstances that entail serious human rights violations and/or international crimes; b) encourage individuals and leaders at UM to engage in partnerships with such institutions.

For institutions on the brightlist, this means that UM commits to actively supporting and upholding these partnerships, for example by showcasing positive outcomes of such partnerships, and/or providing financial support to initiatives with these partners. As mentioned in the HRDD framework, the consequences of strategic partners being listed either on the block- or brightlist does not apply to individual collaborations or non-strategic partnerships.

Appendix 2: Recommendation regarding university communication

The Human Rights Advisory Committee also recommends that the Executive Board creates a policy setting out how the university communicates in terms of new developments internationally regarding serious human rights violations, war crimes or international crimes. In our view, such a policy should include outreach to UM community members with personal and/or professional ties to countries or peoples involved.

MEMO

Maastricht University

Title	Advice Human Rights Advisory Committee on partnerships in Israel-Palestine buiten scope	
Date	30 October 2025	
Authors	5.1 lid 2 e [redacted]	
Discussed with	5.1 lid 2 e [redacted]	
Executive Board portfolioholder	Rianne Letschert	
Confidential	Yes	
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Keywords / labels for archiving	Human Rights Advisory Committee, HRAC, Human Rights Due Diligence, HRDD, mensenrechten toetsingskader, partnerschappen, Israel, Israël, buiten scope	
Decision-making process		
CvB	<i>Decision</i>	<i>04-11-2025</i>
University Council Strategy Committee	<i>Orally, for information</i>	<i>05 11 2025</i>
University Council Plenary	<i>Orally, for information</i>	<i>19 11 2025</i>
Management Team	<i>For information</i>	<i>17 12 2025</i>

Request to the Executive Board	1. The Executive Board decides on the continuation of UM's Institutional Strategic Partnerships with Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel and [REDACTED] - as specified in Annex 1. Executive Board reaction to advice HRAC. 2. The Executive Board decides to communicate the decision and argumentation to the partner institutions; to the relevant Deans and UM contact persons; and to publish the Executive Board decision and argumentation (Annexes 1 and 2), the press release (Annex 3) and the HRAC phase 1 (Annex 4 and 5) and 2 (Annex 6 and 7) reports, internally and externally so that the UM community and wider public are informed. 3. The Executive Board decides to inform the University Council Strategy Committee (5 November) and the University Council Plenary Committee (19 November) orally of the Executive Board decisions, and the Management Team (in its meeting on 17 December).
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Subject and Summary

- **Subject:**

This memo presents the EB's decision on the Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC)'s advice on Maastricht University (UM)'s institutional strategic partnerships (ISPs) with Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel and [buiten scope]

- **Context / reason for submission:**

In the past academic year, UM has developed and implemented a Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) assessment framework and tool to help make an informed assessment of whether, and if so, to what extent, partners with whom we have or enter into a collaboration, are involved in serious human rights violations and/or international crimes. In April 2025, a UM Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC) has been established, and the HRAC and Executive Board jointly agreed that the HRAC would start its assessment in a pilot period ending in Q1 2026, starting with an assessment of UM's institutional strategic partnerships in three countries, including Israel/Palestine, [buiten scope]

In September 2025, the HRAC delivered its preliminary advice on our institutional strategic partners in Israel [buiten scope] This preliminary advice has been shared with the partners to give them the opportunity to respond; after that, the HRAC has finalised its partner assessment reports. The HRAC has now offered its final advice on our institutional strategic partners in Israel and [buiten scope]

- **Summary:**

This memo presents the Executive Board decision on UM's institutional strategic partnerships in Israel and [buiten scope] The aim is to ensure that there are no indications that UM's strategic institutional partners in Israel and [buiten scope] are involved in any serious contributions to human rights violations and/or international crimes. The proposed Executive Board decision is attached (in Annexes 1 and 2).

- **Connection to UM Strategy:**

Our University's Global Engagement Policy is based on a set of core principles including academic freedom, scientific integrity, protection of human rights, co-creation, mutual respect and mutual benefit. In all our (potential) partnerships, including those in countries with challenging socio-political situations (e.g. relating to academic freedom or human rights), we carefully consider our participation in the context of our strategic goals and the added value to both UM and stakeholders in the partner country (such as students or academic staff). In making these considerations, we aim to find a balance between the importance of academic collaboration, the benefit that international cooperation can bring to academia and science diplomacy on the one hand, and academic freedom, scientific integrity, adherence to human rights and knowledge security considerations on the other.

We approach global engagement with countries where those values are under pressure with "yes, unless we have major concerns". UM encourages global engagement in teaching, research and capacity and community building as international collaboration is crucial for the quality of our research and teaching. We are aware though that global engagement and international student and staff mobility may involve risks relating to academic freedom, knowledge security (e.g. development of knowledge and technologies that can in potential be misused for military or economic advantages by others), or other kinds of ethical risks (e.g. relating to scientific integrity or human rights violations). Our global engagement policy states that where we have concerns on

these aspects when evaluating (existing and potential) education and research partnerships at central and decentral levels, extra checks will be carried out to limit such risks.

1. Description of the policy/proposal

1. Objective(s)

This memo aims to advise the Executive Board in taking its decision on UM's institutional strategic partnerships in Israel and **buiten scope** based on the HRAC's advice.

2. Proposed approach

Based on the Committee's advice (Annex 2 and 3), The Executive Board decides on the Institutional Strategic Partnerships with Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel and **buiten scope** as specified in Annex 1 and 2.

3. Expected outcomes

n.v.t.

4. Communication strategy

The further communication process is as follows:

30 October	MUO-IO submits final memo (on final HRAC advice) to the Executive Board (EB)
31 October	Executive Board decision on the two partnerships
31 October	EB sends letters to the two partners and to Rabin Medical Center and Enspire to inform them of EB decision (letters to be prepared by MUO-IO)
31 October	MUO-IO informs the relevant deans and UM coordinators of the partnership projects of the EB decision
31 October	M&C communicates EB decision to the UM community and on the UM website, coordinated and in the following form: - A brief message on UMployee and via student communication channels - With in attachment: (i) the full EB decision and argumentation, and (ii) the full HRAC country (phase 1) and partner (phase 2) reports.
After 31 Oct	Separate publication (after the above steps have been completed) by the HRAC of its country and partner advisory reports on the HRAC UMployee page.

5. Collaboration around this policy/proposal

The communication (both in terms of content and the process described above) is being developed in close alignment with MUO-IO, M&C, EB, and the HRAC.

2. Legal review (if applicable)

Not applicable

3. Financial review (if applicable)

Not applicable

4. Digitalization review (if applicable)

Not applicable

5. Impact on sustainability goals (if applicable)

Not applicable

5. Staff implications

Not applicable

6. Risk analysis

Appendices

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| Annex 1. | Executive Board reaction to advice HRAC (English version) |
| Annex 2. | Bestuurlijke reactie op advies HRAC (Dutch version) |
| Annex 3. | UM Press Release |
| Annex 4. | HRAC Phase 1 country report Israel/Palestine |
| Annex 5. | buiten scope |
| Annex 6. | HRAC Phase 2 partner report Israel/Palestine |
| Annex 7. | buiten scope |
| Annex 8. | UM HRDD Framework final |
| Annex 9. | Template Part 1 – HRDD Country Assessment Tool |
| Annex 10. | Template Part 2 – HRDD Partner Assessment Tool |



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Executive Board

your reference

our reference
C25.02572-MD

direct line

5.1 lid 2 e

Maastricht
31-10-2025

Subject: Partnership Enspire – Maastricht University

Dear 5.1 lid 2 e

I am writing to inform you of the outcome of the review carried out by the Human Rights Assessment Committee at Maastricht University, concerning our partnership.

As you know, there has been regular contact between our organisations throughout this process, including the sharing of a draft advice from the Committee. Upon further analysis, it became clear to us that our partnership cannot be defined as an institutional strategic partnership. According to our Framework, only institutional strategic partnerships fall within the scope of assessment by the Committee.

As a result, the Committee's analysis regarding Enspire will not be included in its final advisory report, and the Executive Board of Maastricht University will therefore not take a formal decision on this collaboration. This means that our existing agreement may continue as normal.

The time it has taken to reach this conclusion relates to the fact that the Committee is currently operating in a pilot phase, during which we continue to learn and parts of the scope and procedures are still being refined. We appreciate your understanding during this process.

Please consider this letter as the formal conclusion of the review process with regard to this collaboration. I can imagine you may have questions regarding the process which you would like to discuss in a video call. Please let me know if this is the case and I will make sure we can meet at short notice.

Yours sincerely,

on behalf of the Executive Board of Maastricht University,

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Prof.dr. R. Letschert
President

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