

Oppose the firing of Google workers for protesting tech giant's complicity in Gaza genocide!

Niles Niemuth
18 April 2024

The *World Socialist Web Site* calls for the immediate reinstatement of 28 Google workers fired Wednesday for their involvement in sit-in protests in New York and California demanding the tech giant end its complicity in Israel's genocide in Gaza and its occupation of Palestinian territory. The charges against nine workers who were arrested Tuesday night after they peacefully occupied Google offices must also be dropped.

The firings were followed up by further repression of pro-Palestinian and anti-genocide protests in New York City. Columbia University called in the police to arrest more than 100 students who had set up an encampment at the university to oppose the mass slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza.

Joseph Kishore, presidential candidate of the Socialist Equality Party, issued a statement Thursday supporting the reinstatement of the Google workers, as well as their demand for Google to end its collaboration with the war machine of Israel.

Noting that Google "has close ties to the US state apparatus and military-industrial complex," he said:

The company has played a central role in the state-backed campaign to censor the Internet, focused on left-wing opposition to war and inequality.

Google's connection to the Israeli state underscores the fact that the genocide could not be carried out without the backing of the American ruling class and its two parties, the Democrats and the Republicans.

The Google employees were demanding that the company drop its work on Project Nimbus, a \$1 billion contract which provides the Israeli government, including the Israeli Ministry of Defense, with cloud computing services, including artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. A leaked contract shows that Google billed the Israeli Ministry of Defense \$1 million for consulting services.

The employees who protested held up signs that demanded, "No more genocide for profit," and "No cloud for apartheid." Their brave stand was rapidly met with repression. The company called the police to remove nine protesting employees from the offices, claiming they were trespassing, and fired them as well as 19 other protesting workers.

Chris Rackow, Google's head of global security, sent a memo to all employees threatening anyone else considering protesting against Google's involvement in the genocide. "Following investigation, today we terminated the employment of twenty-eight employees found to be involved. We will continue to investigate and take action as needed," Rackow declared.

He added the following thuggish threat: "If you're one of the few who are tempted to think we're going to overlook conduct that violates our policies, think again."

A statement from Google workers with the No Tech for Apartheid campaign in response to the summary firings noted that those who took action were well within their rights. "Google workers have the right to peacefully protest about terms and conditions of our labor," they wrote, adding, "These firings were clearly retaliatory."

The statement denounced parent company Alphabet's

CEO Sundar Pichai and Google Cloud head Thomas Kurian as “genocide profiteers.”

Under its parent company Alphabet, Google is among the largest information technology companies in the world. Google’s more than 130,000 workers oversee operations from offices in some 50 countries, encompassing an array of sectors that are critical for the operation of the global economy, including Google’s ubiquitous search engine, cloud computing and consumer electronics. The company is also on the cutting edge of developments that promise to be critical in the future, including artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

As it has grown into a global trillion-dollar behemoth over the last quarter-century, Google has developed into a key prop for the operation of American imperialism and its allies, providing critical technology services to the US military-industrial complex and other militaries around the world. At the end of 2022, Google was awarded a \$9 billion cloud computing contract by the Pentagon in conjunction with Amazon, Oracle and Microsoft.

It has been shown that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has been using other AI tools for its genocidal ethnic cleansing operations in Gaza, in particular, a program known as Lavender that was developed by the IDF’s spy outfit Unit 8200. In six months, the IDF has damaged or destroyed more than half of all homes in the narrow territory and killed at least 40,000 Palestinians, half of them children. At least 99 veterans of Unit 8200 were working for Google as of 2022.

Meanwhile, active opposition from within the company to its involvement in the operations of American imperialism has been growing:

- More than 3,000 Google employees signed a letter to company executives in 2018 demanding an end to their involvement in the US military’s illegal drone killing operations through Project Maven, which used AI to determine targets for drone strikes.

- In 2019, nearly 1,600 Google employees signed a petition to corporate leadership demanding that it commit to not supporting the operations of US Customs and Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which are responsible for the crackdown on migrants, “until they stop engaging in human rights abuses.” In response, Google fired four of the workers who helped organize the protest.

- In March of this year, Google fired software engineer Eddie Hatfield for protesting against Project Nimbus during Mind the Tech, an annual Israeli conference in New York. A letter signed by more than 600 employees denounced the company’s sponsorship of the conference, under the headline, “Stop profiting off of Israeli apartheid and violence against Palestinians.”

Workers across the United States and internationally must mobilize to defend the 28 fired Google workers. Since Israel launched its onslaught in October, with the full backing of the Biden administration and the other imperialist governments, millions have protested around the world demanding a ceasefire. Appeals to the powers-that-be have been met with police repression and the grotesque slander that those who oppose the genocidal operations of the IDF are “antisemitic.” The attack on the Google workers involved in “No Tech for Apartheid” is part of this broader effort to suppress and silence opposition to the genocide.

The fight against Google’s complicity in the Gaza genocide and for an end to the IDF’s bloody operations, which, with the full support of President Joe Biden, are threatening to expand into a wider regional war with Iran, requires a turn by tech workers to their brothers and sisters in the broader working class to mobilize workers in a powerful international movement against imperialist war and its root, the global capitalist system.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact