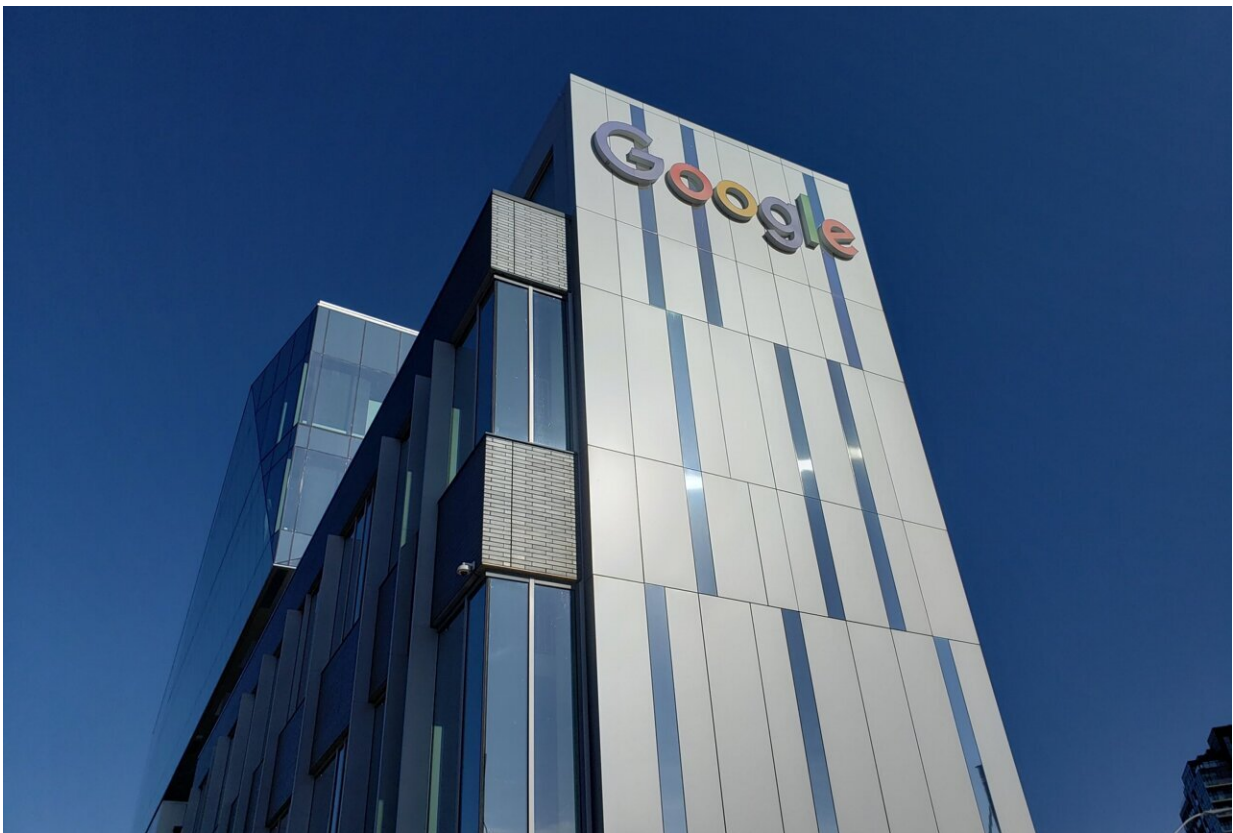


Dozens of Google employees protest use of company's tech for war in Gaza

April 17 2024, by Nollyanne Delacruz, The Mercury News



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A group of disappointed and angry Google employees protested outside a company building on April 16 after it was reported that the search giant had deepened a contract with the Israeli government.

Googlers in New York City and Sunnyvale took action with the activist group No Tech for Apartheid, demanding that the company drop its \$1.2 billion cloud contract with the Israeli military and government. They also called on the company to stop the harassment, intimidation and censorship of Muslim, Arab and Palestinian employees; and stop retaliation against workers who speak out against Project Nimbus, a cloud computing project spearheaded by the Israeli government with collaboration from Google and Amazon Web Services.

Emaan Haseem, a software engineer, said that working at Google and supporting [human rights](#) issues by speaking out against the war in Gaza should not be mutually exclusive.

"To find out that your labor is being used for war still is very jarring to my coworkers and myself," Haseem said.

The group staged a sit-in Tuesday morning at Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian's office in Sunnyvale. Marie Vachovsky, a [software engineer](#) at Google, and Haseem said they were both at the sit-in at Kurian's office. Vachovsky said a group of 20 to 30 people had occupied the office, but were escorted out of the building by security.

Outside the Google office, dozens of employees wore shirts with the phrase "Googlers against genocide" on it, with "genocide" being colored in Google's classic colors. Some passed out "Free Palestine" buttons and others waved Palestinian flags. One of the signs even called out Google's onetime slogan, "Don't be evil," as they called for an end to retaliation against employees who spoke out against Project Nimbus.

According to Wired magazine, another sit-in was being held at the Google office in New York and outdoor protests were taking place in San Francisco and Seattle. Tuesday's action came a day after protesters opposed to the war in Gaza blocked two major Bay Area freeways

during the Monday morning commute.

This protest followed an article by Time Magazine reporting that the Israeli Ministry of Defense has its own "landing zone" into Google Cloud, giving them a way to store and process data and access AI services. The agreement, which was dated March 27, also gave the Israeli government a 15% discount on consulting fees.

On April 8, a Google spokesperson told the magazine that their work is largely for civilian purposes; this was the first time the Israeli Ministry of Defense was revealed as a Google Cloud customer. A spokesperson for Google could not be reached for comment Tuesday afternoon.

"I did not join Google to use the technology that I'm building towards a military," Vachovsky said during the protest. "I also didn't join Google to have my salary funded by technology and by contracts used by militaries,"

Noura Khouri, a preschool teacher and community organizer with Al-Awda: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition, said she felt proud and honored to be standing with the protesting Googlers who put their livelihoods at risk to demand that the company not use technology to aid the war in Gaza.

"Google is known for its culture of openness and human rights, of equity and justice, and we're just asking that they uphold their own values to do no harm, to do no evil and to do the right thing," Khouri said. "And we really want to support them in doing the right thing."

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