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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The alibi of AI: algorithmic models of automated killing

Anthony Downey[1]

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Abstract
The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Automated Target Recognition (ATR) optimises martial prophecies of perpetual threat while simultaneously exonerating the politically inclined prosecution of "forever" wars. The affordances of AI in data-centric warfare are, as a result, not only in line with military demands but also increasingly consistent with government mandates and the zero-sum game of national security. Deployed by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Gaza since October 2023 (and in service there since at least 2021), this article will propose that the use of AI in ATR systems such as The Gospel (*Habsora*) and Lavender demonstrates these invariably fatal techno- and thanato-political alignments. Although regularly offered up to deny the fact that automated prototypes of killing are a prevailing reality in contemporary wars, I will observe how the safeguards nominally associated with the so-called human-in-the-loop (HITL) defence are effectively nothing more than a convenient fallacy. A stark reality has therefore emerged in modern warfare: through the use of ATR, and Automated Weapons Systems (AWS) more broadly, AI is reliably providing an alibi for the prosecution of wholesale methods of killing without, in turn, provoking much by way of substantive political censure or legal accountability.

Keywords Artificial intelligence (AI) · Automated target recognition (ATR) · Autonomous weapons systems (AWS) · Israel-Hamas war · The gospel (Habsora) · Human-in-the-loop systems (HITL) · Algorithms · "threshold values"

Introduction

The interventions of so-called human-in-the-loop (HITL) operatives are regularly understood to provide an effective counterweight to the opaque use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Automated Target Recognition (ATR). The belief in the capacities of HITL provisions is substantiated through arguments that nominate human oversight as a moderating influence. The deployment of a HITL that will remedy, or render transparent, the routinely fatal computations of unaccountable apparatuses needs to be nevertheless disputed: AI, a key driver in the evolution of ATR, was not designed, nor has it been developed, to accommodate oversight in a form that is anything other than a rote, if not routine, pattern of intercession.[1] In the pursuit of better models of prediction, and as evidenced in its cybernetic origins, the modus

✉ Anthony Downey
anthony.downey@bcu.ac.uk

[1] Birmingham City University, Birmingham, UK

[1] Throughout the following, I use the term Artificial Intelligence (AI) to define an apparatus that can—theoretically—perform tasks with a human-like intelligence and, in turn, recognise patterns, effect decisions, and solve problems independent of human input. In broader terms, I understand AI, in the context of ATR, to be a programmable apparatus that—based on data inputs and training—can "reason", adapt to circumstances and act to ensure real life impacts. More specifically, I am interested in the extent to which the operative logic of AI, which is fundamentally premised upon the statistical rationalisation of so-called Big Data to generate predictions, produces phantasms of potential violence to justify the event of actual violence (Downey 2024a, b, 2024a).

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operandi of AI has been historically geared towards automation and ever more autonomous systems of decision-making.[2] In an era of multi-domain and multi-dimensional warfare, the demand for accelerated forms of decision-making has further subsidised the demotion, if not total elision, of human involvement in ATR.[3] As a framework for waging war through the prediction of threat and as a means to eliminate risk, AI has become, in sum, decisive in the prosecution of so-called "forever" wars without attracting commensurate levels of political oversight or legal accountability.

It is from within this context that the largely occluded and opaque processes that support the development of data-centric, algorithmic warfare essentially relegate the programmer-cum-operator to an ancillary agent in a multi-agency, networked apparatus.[4] A stark reality has therefore emerged in contemporary warfare: consistently offered up to deny the fact that automated paradigms of death are a prevailing fact, the so-called human-in-the-loop (HITL) safeguard is nothing more than a convenient fallacy sustained, in part, by ineffective legislative frameworks.[5] All of which begs a question: If the vision of a human operative as a veritable deus ex machina force—exemplifying the presence, that is, of judicious and non-biased moderation—has become nothing more than a self-serving defence designed to counter accusations of fully mechanised methods of annihilation, has the entire logic of a HITL become a de facto alibi for the prosecution of wholesale methods of killing?[6]

The concerns expressed here are neither abstract nor conjectural if we consider the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) deployment of ATR in Gaza since October 2023.[7] Although this was not the first known instance of its use there, a widely publicised article by the investigative journalist and filmmaker Yuval Abraham—published on November 30, 2023—convincingly argued that the implementation of AI-powered systems of ATR not only established an unprecedented level of bombing in Gaza but did so indiscriminately.[8] Drawing on conversations with current and former members of Israel's intelligence community (including military and air force personnel), numerous Palestinian testimonies, documentation from the Gaza Strip, official statements from an IDF spokesperson, and accounts submitted by representatives of Israeli state institutions, Abraham's article provided credible insights from multiple sources who had first-hand knowledge of ATR systems. In the wake of Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, Abraham concluded that the widespread implementation of AI in ATR had ensured that the IDF could "generate more potential targets than ever before" which duly resulted in the army significantly expanding the

[2] Largely associated with the work of Norbert Wiener (1894–1964) and his research into the properties of feedback in machinic and neurophysiological processes, cybernetics originated in the ambition to produce better models of human–machine automation and, in the process, generate more efficient networks of prediction that ultimately excluded, in any role other than that of a programmer or administrator, human intervention. Wiener's work on military systems of prediction is covered in detail in Galison 1994. For a fuller discussion of Wiener in relation to black box systems and autonomous weapons systems (AWS), see Weber 2011.

[3] The degree to which ATR prototypes, and Automated Weapons Systems (AWS) more generally, increasingly circumvent the precautions associated with HITL has been consistently observed for almost two decades. See Weber 2009, 2016; Sharkey 2012, 2016; Suchman 2020; Schwarz 2021a, b; Renic and Schwarz 2023; Walker 2025.

[4] Some commentators have argued the opposite, suggesting that, in military terms, judgement, or the human-in-the-loop, "encompasses command intentions, rules of engagement, administrative management, and moral leadership. These functions cannot be automated with narrow AI technology. *Increasing reliance on AI, therefore, will make human beings even more vital for military power, not less*" (Goldfarb and Lindsay 2022, 9. Emphasis added). Although the authors somewhat contentiously suggest that data-driven machine prediction can "*efficiently* fill in information needed to optimize a given utility function", they also note that "the specification of the utility function ultimately relies on human judgment about *what exactly should be maximized or minimized*" (Goldfarb and Lindsay 2022, 9. Emphasis added).

[5] It is notable that, despite their widespread deployment, it was only in December 2023 that the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted its first ever resolution on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWs). Stressing urgency, UN Resolution 78/241 highlighted the challenges raised by "new technological applications in the military domain, including those related to artificial intelligence [AI] and autonomy in weapons systems" (UN Resolution 78/241).

[6] In June 2024, Mirjana Spoljaric, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), delivered a speech focusing on AI, cyber defence and warfare. Observing the humanitarian impact of AWS, Spoljaric noted that such systems risk unintentional escalations of wars and weapons proliferation, both of which would add to the suffering experienced by victims of armed conflicts. In more specific terms, Spoljaric highlighted how the applications of AI indicate it could be used "against a wider range of targets, over longer time periods, and with fewer possibilities for humans to intervene". In addition, she proposed that AI is "influencing and accelerating military decisions about who or what is targeted in armed conflict in ways that surpass human cognitive capacity and therefore undermine the quality of decision-making" (Spoljaric 2024).

[7] In October 2023, an attack by Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in Southern Israel killed 1,195 people, of which 815 were civilians. Additionally, it is estimated that 251 hostages were also taken to Gaza (Human Rights Watch 2024). Following the attack, Israel launched an extended bombing campaign and ground invasion of Gaza that, despite a truce that was abandoned by Israel in March 2025, is ongoing at the time of writing.

[8] Abraham published two articles, the first of which, "'A Mass Assassination Factory': Inside Israel's Calculated Bombing of Gaza", outlined the use of The Gospel (*Habsora*) in Gaza (See Abraham 2023). In April 2024, he also published a detailed account of Lavender, another AI-powered targeting mechanism in use in Gaza (See Abraham 2024). In the first half of this essay, I draw upon Abraham's initial findings in his 2023 article, while the latter sections refer to his 2024 article.

"bombing of targets that are *not distinctly military in nature*" (Abraham 2023. Emphasis added).[9]

Apart from raising questions about potential legal prosecution, the upshot of the indiscriminate destruction of non-military targets ensures that, since October 2023, the deployment of AI-powered models of ATR in Gaza has not only expanded the designation of the term "target" but also automated the process of widespread killing at the expense of anything approaching consequential human intervention.[10] To substantiate this latter point, I will detail how the (i) operational agency of AI—its deterministic, purposive logic—in the context of ATR elides human input: based on past sequences of behaviour, AI recursively rationalises patterns in historical data to autonomously project seemingly inevitable threat—be it real or, indeed, computationally concocted (Downey 2024a). By virtue of autonomously processing data to summon forth threats, AI not only modulates and diminishes human input, it correspondingly provides a pretext, as witnessed in Gaza, for dehumanising "targets".[11] In the event of reducing people to statistically rationalised data, a schema that provokes models of "digital dehumanisation", the devices needed to prosecute war can, as we will see, simultaneously become the means to duly exonerate anyone involved in the "kill-chain" of modern conflicts.[12] It is from within this schema that we can more fully understand the degree to which the use of AI has become, I will propose, a concomitant alibi for widespread killing and destruction.

Through defining the operational agency, or agentic force, of AI-enhanced targeting systems, we can thereafter determine the critical role of (ii) "automation bias" in the relativisation of human input into models of ATR. Used here to describe an impulsive deference to a mechanistic calculation of what constitutes a target, "automation bias" has long been a feature of mechanised warfare. The lessening of critical thinking and human input into automated systems, the term implies, leads to complacency. Given that automation, in broad terms, defines a self-enclosed and self-sufficient system, it is not surprising that human operators—under the pressure of time and other factors—become increasingly deferential to the allure of autonomously produced solutions. To fully explain the implications of this, the final section of

[9] The bombing of non-military targets in Gaza led to a UN report accusing Israel of "genocidal acts" in Gaza, specifically as such acts relate to the bombing of maternity units. See:
https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/more-human-can-bear-israels-systematic-use-sexual-reproductive-and-other
And here:
https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf

[10] A series of reports in The Lancet have attempted to fully account for the number of people killed in Gaza to date. In the first of these, it was stated that "[a]pplying a conservative estimate of four indirect deaths per one direct death to the 37, 396 deaths reported, it is not implausible to estimate that up to 186,000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza" (Khatib et al. 2024, p. 237). A more recent report in The Lancet, published in early 2025, suggested that recorded deaths from bombs and other traumatic injuries, based on peer-reviewed statistical analysis, could have underestimated the number of dead in the first nine months of the war (October 7, 2023-June 30, 2024) by more than 40% (Jamaluddine et al. 2025). This report also noted the "exceptionally high" mortality rate in the war in Gaza: "The estimated annualised mortality from traumatic injury of 39·3 per 1000 people is exceptionally high, surpassing rates seen during earlier conflicts in the Gaza Strip. Although daily traumatic injury mortality decreased since December, 2023, both the scale and age–sex patterns of traumatic injury deaths raise grave concerns about the conduct of the military operation in Gaza despite Israel stating that it is acting to minimise civilian casualties. The majority of deaths (59·1%) occurred among women, children, and older people, groups considered particularly vulnerable in conflict-affected settings and less likely to be combatants" (Jamaluddine et al. 2025, 7).

[11] On October 9, 2023, while announcing "a complete siege on the Gaza Strip", the then Israeli Defense Minister (Yoav Gallant) stated that "We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly" (Middle East Eye 2023). On December 13, 2023, following these and other comments, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency directly addressed the plenary of the Global Refugee Forum where he noted that he needed to "raise the alarm about the dehumanization that is rampant during this war […] Dehumanizing and derogatory language should not be normalized" (Lazzarini 2023). For Amnesty International, the dehumanization of Palestinians "has been a constant feature of Israel's apartheid system: they are treated as an inferior racial group undeserving of basic human rights and necessities. To maintain this system of oppression and domination, Israel has long subjected Palestinians, including those in Gaza, to torture, arbitrary detention, forcible transfer and unlawful killings and injuries. As part of this system of apartheid, Israel's unlawful blockade of Gaza had been slowly inflicting harmful conditions of life on Palestinians there for 16 years prior to 7 October 2023, leaving them in a uniquely vulnerable situation" (Amnesty International 2024a, b, p. 279).

[12] The term "digital dehumanisation" is used by the Stop Killer Robots campaign to define "a process where humans are reduced to data, which is then used to make decisions and/or take actions that negatively affects their lives". See https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/stop-killer-robots/digital-dehumanisation/. In respect of the process of digital dehumanisation at work in the AI-enhanced platforms for targeting in Gaza, the Stop Killer Robots campaign observed the following: "Since the UNGA [United Nations General Assembly in 2023] last year, reports of Israel's use of wider military AI tools in Gaza have shown the devastating and unacceptable harm that can result from seeking to increase the speed of violence through AI and automation, entailing the erosion of meaningful human control and decision-making in the use of force, and *the reduction of people to data points*" (Jones 2024. Emphasis added).

this article will focus on how the cumulative agentic force of AI—its operational agency and the disposition towards "automation bias"—needs to be more fully understood in the context of how (iii) "threshold values" operate in algorithms and, crucially, how the latter can be all too readily calibrated towards ever more debatable ends.[13]

Relating to variables in algorithmic calculations, the calibration of "threshold values" in AI systems can substantiate threat. Where human intervention in this process does occur, I will note that it appears to involve a dubious process of expanding—rather than questioning—the designation of potential threats, or "targets". How, we need to then ask, is a political ideology based on the paranoid projection of threat—imagined or otherwise—conditionally hardwired into a mechanical apparatus? To ask as much is to raise the question of whether the known "scores", or "thresholds", used by the IDF to determine targets and, respectively, the "threshold values" associated with seemingly objective algorithmic weights and biases are, in all but name, amalgamated in the pursuit of rampant killing?

Through focusing on how the war in Gaza has proceeded since October 2023, and how the blueprint for it was evident in the relatively restricted Israel-Hamas war of May 2021, the intention here is to provide a critical framework and accessible methodology for defining how the use of AI to identify, if not generate, targets has contributed to the indiscriminate slaughter of entire communities.[14] To address, albeit in part, the resounding lack of a consequential political response and anything resembling fit-for-purpose legal deliberation on the use of ATR, I will draw attention to how the level of disproportionate killing in Gaza has been predicated upon, if not *proportionate* with, the capacity for AI to automate the process of targeting.[15] The subject we must confront going forward is whether the IDF's rationale of pre-emption, a long-standing feature of militaristic attempts to eradicate danger through pre-empting threats, not only capitalises upon a basic function of AI—the purposive logic of algorithmic extrapolation—but does so to prolong a "forever" war that has been deemed disproportionate if not genocidal.[16] In its capacity to summon forth threats, through

[13] The term "automation bias" is not to be confused with "algorithmic bias", which tends to describe how, due to an algorithm's design, data, and systemic design, the decisions or predictions made by an AI reflects and reproduces existing biases or inequalities evident in our societies. For a discussion of "algorithmic bias" in the systematic training and systemic design of AI systems used to train AWS see Downey 2023. For a discussion of how algorithms reify inequalities and biases that already exist in social orders, see Paglen and Downey 2020.

[14] In accordance with estimates released by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOHCHR), which were based on data provide by the Ministry of Health in Gaza (the latter being a trusted source according to the UN), it was estimated that between 7 October 2023 and 19 November 2024 at least 43,972 Palestinians were killed and 104,008 were injured (UNOHCHR Humanitarian Situation Update #239, 2024). This needs to be considered, as noted above, with reports published in The Lancet in 2024 and 2025 relating to the actual and projected number of dead in the war in Gaza (Khatib et al. 2024; Jamaluddine et al. 2025).

[15] Understood through the terms of engagement employed by the IDF in Gaza in 2023 and beyond, the deployment of disproportionate methods in the prosecution of warfare is not unprecedented. During the 2006 Lebanon war, the so-called Dahiya doctrine was adopted by the Israeli military to herald a strategy that actively advocated destroying civilian infrastructure and economic interests to pressure populations to renounce Hezbollah (Khalidi 2014, p. 7). Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot, the architect of the Dahiya doctrine, observed the following statement on behalf of the Israeli army: "What happened in the Dahiya quarter of Beirut in 2006 will happen in every village from which Israel is fired on … We will apply disproportionate force on it and cause great damage and destruction there. From our standpoint, these are not civilian villages, they are military bases … This is not a recommendation. This is a plan. And it has been approved" (Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot, quoted in Khalidi 2014, p. 7. Ellipses in original).

[16] Under international law, set out in both the Genocide Convention and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, genocide is a crime defined as the intent to destroy, in part or whole, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group (Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948, & Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998). Commenting on statements made by Israeli political leaders and their allies in relation to military action in Gaza, the spectre of genocide in Gaza was being raised by the United Nations less than two weeks after the outbreak of the 2023 war. In a statement released on October 19, 2023, nine UN experts argued that there was an immediate risk of genocide against the Palestinian people: "We are sounding the alarm: There is an ongoing campaign by Israel resulting in crimes against humanity in Gaza. Considering statements made by Israeli political leaders and their allies, accompanied by military action in Gaza and escalation of arrests and killing in the West Bank, there is also a risk of genocide against the Palestinian People" (UNOHCHR 2023). In relation to the plight of Palestinians in Gaza and their exposure to potential genocide, on 29 December 2023, South Africa instituted proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over alleged breaches by Israel of its obligations under the Genocide Convention. The ICJ observed that "South Africa contends that the rights in question are 'at least plausible, since they are 'grounded in a possible interpretation' of the Genocide Convention [of 1948]" (International Court of Justice 2024, p. 13). The ICJ further determined that "the right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide" was in jeopardy (International Court of Justice 2024, p. 18). The ruling issued by the ICJ ordered six provisional measures including, and not limited to, calls for Israel to refrain from genocidal acts under the 1948 convention. Speaking of the ruling, Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International, said that the ICJ's ruling was "an authoritative reminder of the crucial role of international law in preventing genocide and protecting all victims of atrocity crimes. It sends a clear message that the world will not stand by in silence as Israel pursues a ruthless military campaign to decimate the population of the Gaza Strip and unleash death, horror and suffering against Palestinians on an unprecedented scale" (Amnesty International 2024a). In March 2024, Francesca Albanese, the Special

the statistical analysis of past patterns and the projection of potential risks, has AI become not only the means to sustain war, but also perpetuate unprecedented levels of death, prolong untold suffering and anguish and, in time, redefine the legal distinction between civilian and non-civilian? And if so, to return to our opening question, is AI therefore complicit in potential crimes against humanity while, in turn, also providing the very alibi through which such accusations will be disavowed in the future?[17]

Footnote 16 (continued)

Rapporteur about human rights in the Palestinian territory, concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that Israel had committed acts of genocide in Gaza. In an executive summary of the report, Albanese stated the following: "By analysing the patterns of violence and Israeli policies in its onslaught on Gaza, the present report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating that Israel has committed genocide has been met. One of the key findings of the report is that the Israeli executive and military leadership and Israeli soldiers have intentionally distorted *jus in bello* principles, subverting their protective functions, in an attempt to legitimize genocidal violence against the Palestinian people." (Albanese 2024, p. 1). On December 5, 2024, Amnesty International released a further report to the effect that "there is sufficient evidence to believe that Israel's conduct in Gaza following 7 October 2023 amounts to genocide" (Amnesty International 2024b, p. 13). The latter report also noted that "[v]iewing those targeted as subhuman, as not warranting protection, is a consistent feature of genocide. In this respect, Israel's long-standing discrimination against Palestinians under apartheid and occupation policies, and their separation policy towards Gaza specifically, had laid the ground for the 'genocidal moment' that followed 7 October 2023" (Amnesty International 2024a, b, p. 281). It was further proposed that there "is no denying that the Hamas-led attacks of 7 October 2023 and the trauma they evoked triggered a military campaign with specific military aims. But they also unleashed a genocide that, with the increasingly dominant openly anti-Palestinian agenda, had been long in the making." (Amnesty International 2024a, b, p. 281).

[17] On May 20, 2024, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim A.A. Khan (KC), announced he was seeking arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his then defense minister, Yoav Gallant, for crimes against humanity: "On the basis of evidence collected and examined by my Office, I have reasonable grounds to believe that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, and Yoav Gallant, the Minister of Defence of Israel, bear criminal responsibility for the […] war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of the State of Palestine (in the Gaza strip) from at least 8 October 2023" (Khan 2024). The ICC also issued arrest warrants for Yahya Sinwar (Head of the Islamic Resistance Movement—Hamas—in the Gaza Strip), Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri (Commander-in-Chief of the military wing of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas), and Ismail Haniyeh (Head of Hamas Political Bureau), all of whom, it was charged, bear "criminal responsibility for […] war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Israel and the State of Palestine (in the Gaza strip) from at least 7 October 2023" (Khan 2024). On November 21, 2024, the ICC followed up their request and issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant, and Deif (who, alongside Sinwar and Haniyeh, is widely considered to be deceased) for crimes against humanity and war crimes in the Gaza Strip (International Criminal Court 2024). For a succinct analysis of the role of the ICC in the prosecution of war crimes in Gaza and elsewhere, see Gearty 2023.

Operational agency and agentic force in AI

Although the deployment of The Gospel became more publicised following news of its use in 2023, it had made a prior appearance in Gaza in the May 2021 war. Referred to as "Guardian of the Walls", the 2021 war highlighted how the then named "Gospel" (minus the definitive article), alongside other AI targeting systems such as "Alchemist," and "Depth of Wisdom", were being routinely used for the purpose of automating target identification.[18] Designed to "generate recommendations for troops in the research division of [Israeli] Military Intelligence, which used them to produce quality targets and then passed them on to the IAF [Israeli Air Force] to strike", the 2021 offensive was considered by some to be the "first artificial-intelligence war" (IDF Intelligence Corps senior officer, cited in Ahronheim 2021). With this in mind, an IDF Intelligence Corps senior officer observed, "artificial intelligence was a key component and *power multiplier* in fighting the enemy" (IDF Intelligence Corps senior officer cited in Ahronheim 2021. Emphasis added). It was, the officer continued, a "first-of-its-kind campaign for the IDF [that] implemented new methods of operation and used technological developments that were a *force multiplier*…" (Ahronheim 2021; emphasis added).[19]

Allowing as it does for a human decision to be made and a missile to be then fired, an assembly of AI-induced options can and does result in violence—or, to use the IDF's more anodyne terms, a "power multiplier" (AI) gives way to a "force multiplier" (destruction). The sequencing involved in automated targeting is notable here: progressing as it does from an algorithmically generated recommendation of a conceivable "target" (which is then relayed to a human operative before being passed on to the Israeli Air Force), the statistical, AI-augmented analysis of past patterns (historical events) and the projection of future possible outcomes (probabilistic events) is converted into the irreversible fact

[18] In all instances, these AI-supported targeting mechanisms involved programmes and platforms developed by soldiers in Unit 8200, an Israeli Intelligence Corps outfit. See Ahronheim 2021.

[19] The deployment of AI in zones of conflict for the purpose of targeting tends to rely, in the first instance, on data gleaned from aerial video surveillance (undertaking by UCAVs and other networks of Wide-Area Aerial Surveillance, or WAAS), signal intelligence (including satellite communications, and other electronic signals, also known as SIGINT), and, more prosaically, information relating to the known whereabouts of "targets", the latter being provided by human intelligence (HUMINT). Other methods include the use of data obtained from sensor data (infrared, thermal, and radar), GPS coordinates, and acoustic data (detected by microphones that can identify vehicles and personnel). The use of AI in ATR and other methods of surveillance in the occupied Palestinian territories relies on all of these elements alongside an extensive infrastructure of facial recognition technology (Talbot 2020; Goodfriend et al. 2021; Goodfriend 2023) and, increasingly, social media analysis (Loewenstein, 2023).

of destruction. The provisional calculations involved in the statistical reification of a target can and do exponentially result, in sum, in actual injury and death.[20]

The innately machinic procedure of narrowing down an input (data) to a solution, or prediction, and from there to a finite point of recommended action (targeting), implies that the affordances of AI have the potential to provoke the event of a missile strike not because of the correctness of a prediction per se but due to the procedural logic programmed into its methods and processes (Amoore 2020, pp. 16–17).[21] To this we could note that, as an unambiguous sequence of instructions, algorithmic predictions can and do represent the "manifestation of a proposed solution" (Bucher 2018, p. 23). Despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that AI can only ever yield probabilistic projections in the provision of a given solution, as opposed to providing definitive forecasts, its avowed predictive function should not distract us from the fact that statistical probability can concoct the presence of threat regardless of whether the latter exists or not (Downey 2024a, b, 2024a).[22] This is to observe that a "paradox arises from, on the one hand, the capacity of algorithms to make happen what they predict, and, on the other, that attempting to predict the future threatens to close its open horizon … a prediction that was intended to cope with the uncertainty of the future can quickly transform into a certainty that may turn out to be illusory" (Nowotny 2021, 50–51). Summoned forth by a seemingly inexhaustible calculus of risk, this is not, to be clear, about the substantiated presence or non-presence of threat; rather, it is about the inexorable agentic force of AI and how it perpetuates a prophetic domain of enduring threat.

When we consider the impact of AI in Gaza today, we need to be aware of precedents: the May 2021 war momentously witnessed the creation of a multidisciplinary centre to produce "hundreds of targets relevant to developments in the fighting, allowing the military to continue to fight *as long as it needs to* with more and more new targets" (Ahronheim 2021. Emphasis added). In what appears to be a rehearsal of sorts for 2023, the prosecution of the war in Gaza in 2021 implies an apparently ready-made, if not indefinite, supply of targets that answers to nebulous martial objectives—the questionable obligation, that is to note, to prolong a conflict for *as long as is needed*. In 2023, conversely, the motivation for the generation of "more potential targets than ever before" would appear to be politically motivated rather than, strictly speaking, driven by militarily necessity: conscious of broader public opinion, the contemporary use of AI platforms such as The Gospel not only allows for an automated process of targeting and the veneer of military progress but also, more ominously, the prosecution of an apparently unending war designed to serve the goal of political survival.[23] The price for such survival, however, would appear to be the projection of a perpetual cycle of mass killing *into the future*—a projection that is ostensibly designed

[20] Quoting a source who compared the damage inflicted in the Gaza war of 2021 to the war in 2023, Abraham's article noted that "[t]he numbers increased from dozens of civilian deaths [permitted] as collateral damage as part of an attack on a senior official in previous operations [in 2021], to hundreds of civilian deaths as collateral damage [in 2023]." Crucially, this source also asserted that the Israeli military command "knowingly approved the killing of hundreds of Palestinian civilians in an attempt to assassinate a single top Hamas military commander" (Abraham 2023).

[21] In her analysis of how algorithms operate in relation to the "crowded data environment of drone images", Louise Amoore (2020, 16. Emphasis added) argues that the "defining ethical problem of the algorithm concerns not primarily the power to see, to collect, or to survey a vast data landscape, but *the power to perceive and distill something for action*." Elsewhere, Amoore and Raley (2017) have noted that "abductive logics of many […] algorithms contrast with deductive reasoning so that they are closer to *experimental processes* of learning and verifying through the available data. In the context of security, abductive and generative processes do not begin with a fixed set of criteria for threat or target, but instead they abductively generate the threats and targets via the recognition of patterns in vast volumes of data" (Amoore and Raley 2017, 6. Emphasis added). Weber (2016, 19) further notes that "[p]otential threats come to be defined so broadly that in principle anybody can pose one in the near future", so much so that the application of "[s]emi-automated technologies of predictive analysis and preemptive action, real-time tracking and targeting are regarded as appropriate ways to handle the challenge of unpredictable risk – an approach reminiscent of the desire to find a 'technological fix' and thus to achieve technological 'preparedness' or indeed superiority.".

[22] In the field of AI, the predictive function of algorithms can be also understood in relation to the so-called "induction fallacy". In albeit simple terms, the widespread use of algorithms, which are highly complex and contingent on multiple operational features, is contingent upon the myth of accurate prediction—or the "induction fallacy" (See Domingos 2015, p. 57–91).

[23] The ongoing war in Gaza has been seen by many as a political demand rather than a military necessity and largely directed at protecting the interests of Benjamin Netanyahu and, by implication, his current government. "Since the initial weeks of the war, many Israelis have sensed that the war's declared aims have been largely unrealistic and that Netanyahu's hidden objectives are personal and political – evading testifying at his criminal corruption trial, preventing a resumption of the protests against his government and disrupting any attempt to hold early elections" (Melman 2024). The firing of Yoav Gallant, Israel's erstwhile defence minister, on November 5, 2024, would likewise suggest significant differences in opinion as to the military necessity viz the political need for the war in Gaza. Elsewhere, it was reported that President Joe Biden, despite his unequivocal support for Netanyahu, had asserted that there is "every reason" to draw the conclusion that the prime minister of Israel was prolonging the war in Gaza for his own political self-preservation (Borger and Roth 2024). For a discussion of the political motivations behind the war in Gaza, see Levy 2024a and Verter 2024.

to counter the alleged phantasm of a recurrent, atavistic, and ancestral violence.[24]

This latter proposition, in all its fatal convergences, was more fully acknowledged in a comment made by a former Israeli intelligence officer, quoted in Abraham (2023) who stated that the current deployment of "The Gospel" in Gaza "facilitated a 'mass assassination factory'."[25] The same officer, in an account that raises questions concerning the prevailing absence of humanitarian and legal restraint, added that the use of AI to generate targets underlines the fact that the "emphasis is on *quantity* and not on quality" (Abraham 2023. Emphasis added). Calculated as but one expedient factor, the reality is that individual operators need "not spend a lot of time" on investigating the substance or validity of the target recommendations (Abraham 2023). Assessed, or judged, on the ability to repeatedly produce more and more targets, human decision-making is not directed here towards moderation—the avowed function of HITL protocols—but, more worryingly, consigned to a metric of expediency that answers to political rather than martial, or indeed legal or ethical, demands.[26]

In the aftermath of October 7, 2023, a series of articles and reports raised questions about the unprecedented number of civilian deaths in the Israel-Hamas war.[27] Analysing the first 3 weeks of the war (October 7–26), one report sought to determine the exact proportion of civilians—or so-called "non-combatants"—who were killed as a ratio of the overall number of dead in Gaza during the same period (Levy 2023). Arguing that the exceptional level of killing was a direct result of the IDF loosening restraints on targets, Levy queried whether the Israeli army was flouting the legal precedent of "discrimination".[28] Historically implying a decision made by humans, the term "discrimination" remains a cornerstone of international humanitarian law (IHL). Mandated and embodied in IHL, the principle is prescriptive since it "states how people *should* think about killing in war" in respect of civil immunity (Watkins and Laham 2020, 4. Emphasis added).[29] Inasmuch as it defines the degree to which an attacking force is required to distinguish—*discriminate*—between combatants (soldiers) and non-combatants (civilians) *in advance* of targeting and killing, Levy stated that "we can conclude that the principle of discrimination was not adhered to [in Gaza], and an unusually high [death] rate will reflect either a departure from the principle of proportionality or a *highly flexible interpretation* of it" (Levy 2023. Emphasis added).[30] Levy went on to conclude that

[24] The phantasm of a chronic historical violence, insofar as it is summoned forth as a rationale for ongoing war, was arguably present in Benjamin Netanyahu's reference—made on October 28, 2023 in Tel Aviv—to the Biblical people of Amalek. Described in the Old Testament as relentless enemies of Israel and widely perceived as an enemy that must be destroyed, the evocation of the Amalekites by Netanyahu has been widely understood as a call to kill all Palestinians, civilians or otherwise (Lanard 2023).

[25] The quote in full proposes that the Habsora system "can 'generate' targets almost automatically at a rate that far exceeds what was previously possible. This AI system, as described by a former [Israeli] intelligence officer, essentially facilitates a 'mass assassination factory'" (Abraham 2023).

[26] Schwarz (2021a, p. 552) proposes that "as digital infrastructures and interfaces dominate the human (military) landscape, not only is human moral agency diminished, but ethical practices become cast in distinctly technological terms … the human becomes digitally co-machinistic (*mitmaschinell*), they are compelled to adopt the logic of speed and optimisation for ethical reasoning and as a result [they become] de-skilled as a moral agent." The concern about meaningful human intervention into ATR and consequential control over AWS and the question of both moral and ethical responsibility is extensively outlined in Schwarz 2021a, b, 2022. For a discussion of an ethical framework for defining key concerns in autonomous weapons systems, see Lee 2020, and Boyle 2015. For extended overviews of ethics as they relate to AWS, see also Asaro 2012; Scharre 2018, 2023; Ekelhof 2019; Bode and Watts 2021; Ferl 2023; Amaroso and Tamburrini, 2021. For an extended discussion of ethics in robotic warfare, IHL, and human rights, see Weber 2009. For further context as to what exactly is meant by "meaningful" in the context of ATR and AWS and how it applies to the quality of decision-making, see Amoroso, 2021.

[27] Observing that "women and children account for nearly 70 percent of all deaths reported in Gaza even though most combatants are men,"one report underscored the "historic pace" at which civilians in Gaza were being killed (Leatherby 2023). Such reports were fully endorsed in November 2024, when the UN stated that the proportion of civilian deaths in Gaza was likely to be over 70% (UNOCHCR 2024a, 5; pp. 6–11).

[28] The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) defines the term "discrimination", also known as "adverse distinction", thus: "In IHL [international humanitarian law], the principle of non-discrimination is reflected in rules prohibiting adverse distinction in treatment of persons based on criteria such as race, gender, nationality, religion or political affiliation. All protected persons – i.e., prisoners of war, civilian internees, the wounded and sick and others who are hors de combat should be treated with the same consideration by parties to the conflict. Each and every person affected by armed conflict is entitled to his/her fundamental rights and guarantees, without discrimination" (ICRC, n.d.).

[29] The ideal of "civil immunity" in war is encoded into international law, see International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRCa). (1977a) Article 48. See also International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRCb). (1977b) Article 51.

[30] Levy's article compared the war in 2023 Gaza—Operation Swords of Iron—to four operations that were based entirely on aerial attacks, rather than ground and aerial operations. These included the Pillar of Defense (November 2012), which lasted about a week; Guardian of the Walls (May 2021), a conflict that endured for 10 days; Breaking Dawn (August 2022), which lasted three days; and Shield and Arrow (May 2023), which lasted five days. Levy drew his data for each of the four operations from the reports of the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre (ITIC), which is located at Gilot in central Israel (Levy 2023). In a separate article Levy (2024a, b) quotes Jeremy Konyndyk—the president of Refugees International—

the "use of artificial intelligence to generate targets at a rapid pace reduced even further the level of caution that in the past characterised human judiciousness" (Levy 2023). The question of "human judiciousness", or the lack thereof, foregrounds a central concern with who, or indeed what, replaces individual—or, for that matter, governmental and legal—responsibility for the prosecution of war through the affordances of AI and the apparatus of ATR. We enter here into a discussion of the all-too-real hazards associated with the presence of "automation bias" and the degree to which an already prevalent feature of ATR—the deferral of judgement to a mechanical process—can be instrumentalised in the pursuit of widespread killing and destruction.

Automation bias in automated target recognition (ATR)

Describing a method in warfare through which human operators of AI platforms defer, or accede, to the decisions made by automated systems, even if they are incorrect or incomplete, "automation bias" is crucial to the efficient working of ATR insofar as it accelerates the process of targeting and firing a missile. Through the utilisation of the apparently objective affordances of AI and concomitant deference to its "efficiency", an error in prediction—which can produce irreversible consequences in a war—can be summarily passed off as a miscalculation or an inaccuracy that is mechanical (objective) rather than intentional (subjective). The implied objectivity of AI, the specious claim that is provides a "view from nowhere", can be likewise deployed to mitigate responsibility for erroneous predictions and render human operators blameless in the displacement, maiming, killing, and traumatising of individuals and, as we have seen in Gaza, entire families and communities.[31] Bearing these points in mind, we need to identify how the over-reliance on and deference paid towards machinic calculations—the overt presence of "automation bias"—is being pursued at the expense of "judicious" thinking and meaningful human intervention.[32]

Following the work of the British psychologist and cognitive scientist Norman H. "Mack" Mackworth (1917–2005), whose studies in the 1940s were based on the capacity of radar operators to competently engage with automated targeting systems over extended periods, it is known that a primary outcome of automation is that human attention is demonstrably degraded over time.[33] Considering how, during World War II, members of the Royal Air Force were often engaged in protracted activities involving visual searches, Mackworth sought to "determine the optimum length of watch for

Footnote 30 (continued)

who observed that the IDF, following an Israeli attack that that killed seven aid workers with the U.S.-based aid group World Central Kitchen in April 2023, effectively "treats Gaza as a free-fire zone with total impunity for gross attacks on civilians" (Konyndyk, quoted in Levy 2024a, b).

[31] In a report released on November 8, 2024, the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner provided an in-depth account of the human rights situation in Gaza over a six-month period (1 November 2023 to 30 April 2024), concluding that the proportion of civilian deaths in Gaza was likely to be over 70%, with 44% of verified victims being children and 26% women (UNOHCHR 2024a, p. 6). The UN's extended analysis of violations covering this period included areas such as the unlawful killing of civilians; the use of human shields; the annihilation of entire families; attacks on humanitarian actors and civilian police; the use of white phosphorus; limitations on humanitarian aid, leading to starvation and hunger; attacks on hospitals and killing of medical personnel; the treatment of hostages in Gaza; targeting of journalists; repeated, mass displacement and attacks on cultural and educational sites. Apart

Footnote 31 (continued)

from the disproportionate number of civilian deaths, the report further determined that the "sheer scale of destruction of civilian homes and essential infrastructure create the conditions for long-term displacement from these areas, which may amount to forcible transfer of the Palestinian population in Gaza. Many Palestinians have been forced to flee to Egypt in conditions which may amount to deportation. Deportation or forcible transfer are war crimes, and when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack, may also amount to a crime against humanity" (UNOCHCR 2024a, p. 24). See also, UN report on War Crimes 2024. As of May 12, 2025, it was estimated by that one in every five people in Gaza is facing starvation and the entire population is confronted with high levels of acute food insecurity and the imminent risk of famine (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification—IPC 2025). The IPC report also noted that nearly "71,000 cases of acute malnutrition among children aged 6 to 59 months, including 14,100 severe cases, are expected to occur between April 2025 and March 2026." (IPC, 2025).

[32] In an article on The Gospel published in December 2023, it was stated that even when humans are demonstrably in the loop, as they would appear to be in the AI platforms established by the IDF in Gaza in 2021 and 2023, there is the ever-present risk that they develop "automation bias" inasmuch as they "over-rely on systems which come to have too much influence over complex human decisions" (Dr Marta Bo, a researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, quoted in Davies et al. 2023). The authors of the article cited Richard Moyes, a researcher who heads Article 36, who suggested that the imminent danger in AI-powered targeting systems is that humans "become cogs in a mechanised process and lose the ability to consider the risk of civilian harm in a meaningful way." See also Bo et al. 2022 and Bhila 2024.

[33] In a 1948 paper focused on standards of human performance under adverse working conditions, Mackworth described the Mackworth Clock, a device that traditionally had a round face with numbered intervals and a single hand that moved in regular increments. Observing how prolonged exposure and ensuing fatigue impacted upon an operator's vigilance, Mackworth registered a distinct deterioration in how often irregular, or unpredictable, movements in the clock were noted (Mackworth 1948). Such findings, however unsurprising they may now seem, have proven durable under contemporary conditions of automation and have been since applied to studies of vigilance in computer-display versions of a clock where it was found that a digitized version of Mackworth's device resulted in the same levels of deterioration in both vigilance and attention (Lichstein et al. 2000).

airborne radar operators on antisubmarine patrol" and how it related to the deterioration of an individual's attention and vigilance (Mackworth 1948, p. 7; See also Mackworth and Kaplan 1962, passim). Following Mackworth's lead, recent research has demonstrated that "participation in a vigilance task typically leads to a loss of task engagement accompanied by feelings of distress and that these changes increase with increments in task difficulty" (Warm et al. 2008, 443; p.439).[34] Referring to vigilance in "human–machine" systems, this latter paper noted that while interest in "vigilance research […] has waxed and waned over the years [it] has increased recently because of the prevalence of automation in human–machine systems" (Warm et al. 2008, p. 434).[35] Interest in the question of vigilance has, in due course, led directly to a consideration of how "advancements in automation technology have *shifted the roles of workers from active controllers to that of system supervisors* who serve in a fail-safe capacity in which they need only react when problems arise" (Warm et al. 2008, p. 434. Emphasis added). Crucially, vigilance, or the lack thereof, has become a core factor in assessing levels of human performance in AI-supported work environments where automated systems are common including "military surveillance, air traffic control cockpit monitoring, seaboard navigation, industrial process/quality control, long-distance driving, and agricultural inspection tasks" (Warm et al. 2008, p. 434).[36] To this already commodious list, we need to add the ATR systems employed in data-centric warfare.

In Abraham's original 2023 article, a source claimed that although a human eye will ostensibly go over specific targets before each attack recommended by The Gospel, it remains, at best, a cursory activity: "We prepare the targets automatically and work according to a checklist," the source is quoted as saying, before confirming that "[i]t really is like a factory. We work quickly and there is no time to delve deep into the target. The view is that *we are judged according to how many targets we manage to generate*" (Abraham 2023. Emphasis added). Evaluated on their ability to produce targets through the generative mechanisms of an ATR structure, the operator is embedded within, appraised by, and conditioned through an automated factory-like system that promotes deference to machinic calculations.[37] Vigilance, where it is indeed present, is disavowed in the name of efficacy, while the predisposition to delegate decision-making due to deteriorating levels of attention—that is, the presence of "automation bias"—would appear to be readily exploited as a means to generate yet more targets. In consequence, the operational agency of ATR transforms the human agent into a complicit, but not necessarily liable, component in a technological apparatus that dispenses death.

Functioning from within an automated system, a mechanism that by its very nature is prone to "automation bias", human operators are not only subservient and subject to processes beyond their control, they are replaceable—*surplus*—within its utilitarian logic: anyone, with sufficient training, can be called upon to maintain and validate the functioning of what is basically an autonomous system, and anyone can be presumably replaced within this structure. Considering the use of AI platforms in Gaza, we are confronted here by an unsettling concern: to what extent is a "highly flexible interpretation" of proportionality, for tactical *and* political ends, exploiting the inevitable presence of "automation bias" in mechanistic systems of targeting? If we can, to whatever extent, agree that the prospect of automated killing in

[34] It is important to note here that vigilance, in the context of human operator overseeing an AI infrastructure for targeting people, has quite another meaning when we consider those targeted: "The use of surveillance from above and predictive technologies create an environment of perpetual hypervigilance to potential attack for those on the ground—further compounding this traumatic incarceration in the 'survival space' of a locked off present into an escalating state of vulnerability to long-term psychological and physiological harm" (Hoskins and Illingworth 2020, p. 77).

[35] In his discussion of the work of Unit 8200, Loewenstein (2023, p. 87) observes a self-published book issued by a Brigadier Colonel Y. in 2021 under the extended title *The Human Machine Team: How to Create Synergy Between Human & Artificial Intelligence That Will Revolutionize Our World*. The volume in question was later revealed to be the work of Yossi Sariel, the then commander of Israel's Unit 8200, and is largely preoccupied with a specific focus on a form of "synergetic learning" between humans and machines that will deter future threat.

[36] Warm et al. observed an article that "described the role of vigilance and situation awareness in fratricide incidents in the Iraq war involving the highly automated Patriot missile system" (See Hawley 2006, cited in Warm 2008, p. 434). Also, of interest here—and likewise noted in Warm et al. (2008, p. 434)—is Hawley et al. 2005, and the issue of human performance levels relative to automation in air defense command and control. "The crux of the problem of new technologies applied to system control is that they tend to remove human operators from moment-to-moment, on-line control and relegate them to the role of supervisory controllers…the problems associated with supervisory control generally fall into one of two categories: (a) loss of situational awareness (SA) and (b) skill decay" (Hawley 2006, p. 4).

[37] There is a separate discussion to be had here on so-called Generative AI (GenAI), a type of artificial intelligence that produces images, videos and other digital artefacts. The adoption of Large Language Models (LLMs), a form of generative AI used to construct text has become a major source of concern when we consider the potential for such systems to generate erroneous content (Poulson 2024). LLMs are the basis of the development of ChatGPT by OpenAI and it has been highlighted that the Israeli army has been developing a ChatGPT-like artificial intelligence tool that is trained on millions of Arabic conversations obtained through the surveillance of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Such a system, it has been proposed, will be "capable of analyzing information and generating, translating, *predicting*, and summarizing text" that will be "likely [used] to further expand Israel's incrimination and arrest of Palestinians" (Abraham 2025).

Gaza—fuelled by the agentic force of AI and "automation bias" more generally—has become exemplary rather than exceptional since 2023, if not 2021, then we need to raise a potentially more disturbing question: has the dehumanisation of entire communities and populations been effectively encoded into the algorithms that power ATR systems?[38] Can the statistical abstractions that stimulate fatal calculations, alongside the iterative, systemic logic of the weights, biases and "threshold values" that validate algorithmically induced predictions, corroborate the military procedures that sanction the expanded generation of targets, civilians or otherwise?

Threshold values and edge cases

When we contemplate the degree to which AI and the algorithmic call to action discloses an agentic, purposive force, it becomes more apparent that algorithms "are not merely finite series of procedures of computation but are also generative agents conditioned by their exposure to the features of data inputs" (Amoore 2020, p. 12. Emphasis added). Returning to our earlier point regarding the agency of AI, automated targeting can be then understood as a schema wherein which exposure to the "features of data inputs" is consequently narrowed down to produce a single output. "As an aperture instrument the algorithm's orientation to action has discarded much of the material to which it has been exposed. At the point of the aperture, the vast multiplicity of video data is narrowed to produce a single output on the object. Within this data material resides the capacity for the algorithm to recognize, or to fail to recognize, something or someone as a target of interest" (Amoore 2020, p. 17). Insofar as algorithms are indeed aperture-like, distilling information towards inevitable military engagements, they are also, as we will see, an agent of dilation that introduce expansive notions of what constitutes the "threshold values" involved in classifying a legitimate "target".[39]

Quoted in an article published in February 2023, approximately eight months before the events of October 7, 2023, an active member of the IDF (Colonel Yoav) offered up a series of remarkably candid insights into the inner workings of AI platforms and how targeting "thresholds" function in algorithmic warfare. Referring to the deployment of AI in the May 2021 war in Gaza and the standard operating procedures used by Unit 8200 (the Israeli Intelligence Corps unit of the IDF), Yoav detailed how "[w]e take original subgroups, calculate their close circle [of personal connections], calculate relevant features, rank results and *determine thresholds*, [and] use intelligence officers' feedback to improve the algorithm."[40] In this environment, data are both omniscient (all-seeing) and yet in constant flux (subject to further input). Inputting data to train an ATR platform, and the generating feedback to improve an algorithm, the human-in-the-loop is imbricated within the calculus of threat and yet also an ancillary agent to it. The immersion of human activity, alongside the diffusion of operational agency across looped networks of input and output, begets a series of queries as to how the circuity, or systemic workings, of AI is being internally programmed and calibrated. Who, or what, is determining "thresholds" of threat, and how?

To more fully fathom this question, we could observe here that the internal, systemic operations of an AI platform often apply "threshold values" to algorithms to moderate and modulate their propensity for more exact levels of prediction. If we understand an algorithm to be a systematic, step-by-step procedure for solving a given problem or accomplishing a task, a "threshold value" in this scenario is basically a parameter that is used, or applied, when those phases are being executed.[41] In technical terms a "threshold value", or a threshold function, is thus a parameter employed by algorithms to improve their predictive capacities. The application of a "threshold value" subsequently achieves, in theory at least, better signals, activates binary decisions, optimises performance, defines outliers (in data), identifies unusual patterns, aggregates and evaluates multiple iterative processes, and determines the statistical significance

[38] There are, Li et al., 2014 argue, two distinct forms of dehumanization: animalistic and mechanistic. "Animalistic dehumanization results from seeing others as lacking what distinguishes humans from animals (i.e., human uniqueness). Mechanistic dehumanization, on the other hand, results from seeing others as *lacking human essence* (i.e., human nature)" (Li et al. 2014, 291. Emphasis added). For a discussion of autonomous robotic systems and processes of dehumanisation in warfare more generally, see Warren and Aiden (2018). For a discussion of how perceptions of civilians and combatants in warfare are developed, where participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) to evaluate a soldier or a civilian from image-based evidence, see Watkins and Laham (2020).

[39] For a fuller discussion of this AI-powered propensity to both focus and yet expand targeting, it has been observed that in 2017 parts of both Somalia and Yemen were declared areas of "active hostilities," which effectively "exempted" them from targeting rules brought in by the Obama administration to prevent civilian casualties: "At the same time, the level of secrecy around these extrajudicial assassinations has increased. This evidence suggests that the automation of data analysis under the sign of artificial intelligence can only serve to exacerbate military operations that are at once discriminatory, in their reliance on profiling and other techniques of prejudicial classification, and indiscriminate, in their failures to adhere to International Humanitarian Law or any other forms of political or legal accountability" (Suchman 2020, p. 181).

[40] Colonel Yoav, quoted in Bog 2023. Emphasis added.

[41] For a useful account of understandability and explainability in military AI as it relates to AWS, see Holland Michel, 2020.

of results.[42] Connoting boundaries—or limit cases—and structures of internal machinic transmission, we need to establish whether the actual scores (thresholds) used by the IDF to define levels of threat and, respectively, the "threshold values" associated with seemingly objective algorithmic circuits are, to whatever level or degree, co-ordinated. If the internal, virtual circuitry of a "threshold value"—the values used to test the logical and prognostic accuracy of AI—is calibrated, in part or whole, in accordance with an external ideological fixation with prevalent threat then who, or what, is ultimately defining the fateful distinction between a "combatant" and a "non-combatant"?[43]

One aspect involved in defining "threshold values" concerns the presence of so-called "edge cases". Used to describe an event that occurs at the boundaries or limits of what an AI platform is designed to handle, a verifiable "edge case" *should* give cause for concern when it comes to the predictive reliability of an algorithm. In the above article, Colonel Yoav, in specific reference to the 2021 war in Gaza, nonetheless observed that "[o]ur platforms go crazy with a lot of edge cases during wartime. This takes its toll with operational continuity of the systems. But we managed to maintain high standards. We managed to update our systems 150 times in 10 days."[44] An "edge case", in this scenario, can refer to an unusual or extreme output that reveals weaknesses, errors, and limitations in the "threshold values" being applied to algorithms. Given that we are talking about a model that is indelibly involved in identifying "targets", any error or limitation in the system—evident in an "edge case"—could arguably produce an inaccurate threat prediction resulting in death. The AI platform, Yoav seems to blithely suggest, can be systemically and quickly updated to account for—and presumably include—"edge cases" that would otherwise fall outside the remit associated with the designated "target" list. Rather than herald a moment of introspection or critical examination, the avowed function of a HITL—the flagging up of "edge cases that do not quite fit—would appear to be effectively elided in this instance in favour of operational advantage.

If the political imperative of wholesale destruction, effected through military prowess and based upon an ambition to wage a seemingly "forever" war, can be encoded into the systemic, internal "threshold values" that define the difference between a so-called combatant or non-combatant (civilian), then it is arguable that paranoiac projections of threat can be reified in the circuitry of AI.[45] If "threshold values" are encoded, to whatever degree, by a perceived sense of existential threat, or a perpetual state of emergency, then what occurs when they are adjusted *according to a need* that remains, at best, politically—and potentially enduring—rather than militarily defined and contained within an ideal of proportionality?[46] In raising such a question, we can unreservedly contemplate a sobering fact: patterns of imminent threat can be always found where needed. This is to further underscore the degree to which the predictions made by AI—based on statistical analysis of past patterns—have "an almost unlimited capacity to find patterns in data. In the time it takes a human to find one pattern, a computer can find millions" (Domingos 2015 p. 72).[47]

The phrase "determine thresholds", in Yoav's account of the May 2021 war in Gaza, needs to be further contextualised through consideration of Abraham's 2024 article on another AI-powered targeting system—known as Lavender—that has been in use in Gaza since at least 2023.[48]

[42] It is important to highlight here that any consideration of how "threshold values" are calibrated and used by AI platforms needs to explore the fact that algorithms can actualise and summon forth "threats" through the systematic training of neural networks (specifically through habitually biased methods of data-labelling) and a systemic reliance on statistical analysis in the actual structural design of machine learning. These processes can and do produce so-called "hallucinations". See Downey 2024a, b, 2024a. To this we could add that, founded on numeric code, an algorithm as an instrument of "knowledge or logical magnification that perceives patterns that are *beyond the reach of the human mind*" (Pasquinelli 2019, p. 4. Emphasis added).

[43] This lack of clarity is potentially both further compounded and aided by the relative complexities involved in legally defining a so-called "legitimate" target: "the challenge of defining "combatant" or "soldier" appropriately [is] a challenge attested to by the fact that 97 of the 161 rules of customary International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are attempts at spelling out more precisely who and what counts as a legitimate target of attack in war" (Watkins et al. 2020, p. 4).

[44] Yoav, quoted in Bog 2023, op cit.

[45] Although not discussing the direct influence of AI, it has been stated that, overall, the technological impact of remote warfare, which relies on algorithms, has resulted in a "fundamental reimagining of the civilian". See Gupta 2023.

[46] In a series of prescient remarks made by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* in 1993, he proposed the following: "in a world tied together as never before by the exigencies of electronic communication, trade, travel, environmental and regional conflicts that can expand with tremendous speed, the assertion of identity is by no means a mere ceremonial matter. What strikes me as especially dangerous is that it can *mobilize passions atavistically*, throwing people back to an earlier imperial time when the West and its opponents championed and even embodied virtues designed not as virtues so to speak but for war" (Said 1993, p. 37. Emphasis added).

[47] As Melanie Mitchell notes, if "there are statistical associations in the training data, even if irrelevant to the task at hand, the machine will happily learn those instead of what you want it to learn" (Mitchell 2019, p. 105).

[48] Alongside The Gospel and Lavender, another AI system, Where's Daddy, was deployed in Gaza. For a useful breakdown of how and when these systems were deployed, see Goodfriend 2024, who notes that "Lavender provides a list of people to be approved for assassination. Gospel tries to determine where they live, or where they store weapons and plan military operations. Where's Daddy sends alerts when the targets enter their family homes, so that the air force knows when to strike" (Goodfriend 2024).

Quoting a source in the IDF, Abraham established the following: "B. said that the reason for this automation [in the Lavender system] was a constant push to generate more targets for assassination. 'In a day without targets [whose feature rating was sufficient to authorize a strike], we attacked at a lower threshold. We were constantly being pressured: "Bring us more targets." They really shouted at us. We finished [killing] our targets very quickly'" (Abraham 2024). The article continued:

> "He [B.] explained that when lowering the rating threshold of Lavender, it would mark more people as targets for strikes: 'At its peak, the system managed to generate 37,000 people as potential human targets,' said B. 'But the numbers changed all the time, because it depends on where you set the bar of what a Hamas operative is. There were times when a Hamas operative was defined more broadly, and then the machine started bringing us all kinds of civil defense personnel, police officers, on whom it would be a shame to waste bombs'" (Abraham 2024).[49]

Seemingly aware of the use of an expanded concept of what constitutes a target, the IDF would appear to unstintingly support the fact of target expansion being hardwired into an ATR system without much by way of human oversight. "There was no 'zero-error' policy. Mistakes were treated statistically," said a source who used Lavender. "Because of the scope and magnitude, the protocol was that even if you don't know for sure that the machine is right, you know that statistically it's fine. So you go for it" (Abraham 2024).[50] Updated data inputted by a human operative, which in theory should be used to either independently substantiate or question the "solutions" being offered by ATR, seems to merely confirm target objectives based on the abstractions of statistical probability. As we saw in 2021, the role of the HITL in Gaza in 2023 and 2024, rather than moderating targeting and killing, or even flagging up anomalies in data or "edge cases", is consistently overlooked in favour of a model of operational continuity that results widespread destruction.

The process of statistical summary involved in training an AI to generate predictions encompasses the aggregation of data and the collation of patterns to arrive at a median outcome. Put another way: statistics is a method of sequential reductionism—a means to arrive at a viable pattern of distribution *through* aggregation. Despite its prescriptiveness, statistical analysis remains fundamental to a decision-making process that determines the distinction between life and death. Working from the statistical prevalence of past features, patterns, and occurrences, AI strives to generalise from input to predict the future and, in succession, eradicate pending threats.[51] When ocular-centric observations and meaningful human input—the so-called HITL—are replaced with summary calculations (statistical aggregations), it is arguable that the function of averaging is not only a form of sequential reductionism, it is also a method to flatten or even out disparate arrays and inputs to take advantage of a pattern that cannot always account for outliers and "edge cases"—behaviour in patterns of life analyses that do not "fit"—in data distributions. The logic of statistical aggregation, alongside the degree to which targeting is already a highly automated process, should give considerable cause for concern here, a fact that was all but admitted by the IDF when it was noted that the Lavender system was frequently proven to be erroneous but was used regardless. Installed to target suspects, it was common knowledge, for example, that "the system makes what are regarded as 'errors' in approximately 10% of cases, and is known to occasionally mark individuals who have merely a loose connection to militant groups, or no connection at all" (Abraham 2024).[52]

In a statement from an IDF spokesperson—delivered on November 2, 2023—and returning here to the use of "The Gospel", it was stated that targeting processes deployed in the platform always presupposes, in part, a degree of human

[49] In a United Nations report published on November 8, 2024, the following is stated: "As of 25 April 2024, the IDF had announced the names of only 75 targeted Palestinians killed, out of over 34,000 reported fatalities. In addition, Israel's stated intention to destroy 'Hamas' governance capabilities', and its targeting of civilian infrastructure and civilian administrators of the de facto authorities, indicated that targeting was expanded to a degree that could amount to the direct targeting of civilians and civilian objects. Intentionally directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects, or in the knowledge the attack would cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects clearly excessive in relation to the concrete and direct overall military advantage anticipated, are war crimes [according to the Rome Statute of 1998]" (UNOCHCR, 2024a,10).

[50] In one of the more unsettling passages from the article, the source referred to as "B." noted the following: "There's something about the statistical approach that sets you to a certain norm and standard. There has been an illogical amount of [bombings] in this operation. This is unparalleled, in my memory. And I have much more trust in a statistical mechanism than a soldier who lost a friend two days ago. Everyone there, including me, lost people on October 7. *The machine did it coldly*. And that made it easier" ("B." quoted in Abraham 2024. Emphasis added).

[51] We should likewise emphasise here that the "production of prediction", to use Adrian Mackenzie's term (2015), in the context of machine learning is profoundly reliant upon internal processes of generalisation that are, in part, contingent upon classification models introduced by humans: "[m]any data mining processes start from a data sample that has already been classified or labelled by someone …In all cases, prediction depends on classification, and classification itself presumes the existences of classes, and attributes that define membership of classes." (Mackenzie 2015, p. 433).

[52] See also, Bethan McKernan and Harry Davies 2024. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes.

input: "This is a system [The Gospel] that allows the use of automatic tools to produce targets at a fast pace, and works by improving accurate and high-quality intelligence material *according to the requirement*. With the help of artificial intelligence, and through the rapid and automatic extraction of updated intelligence—it [The Gospel] produces a recommendation for the researcher, with the goal of having a complete match between the machine's recommendation and the identification performed by a human."[53] The prevailing ambiguity in terms such as "according to the requirement" remains troubling, allowing as it does for a not insignificant degree of uncertainty as to who, or what, defines the "threshold values" in the mechanisms of AI-powered target generation and the role of "edge cases" in such definitions.[54]

As already noted, the self-proclaimed "goal of having a complete match" between machinic projections and human classifications is consistently undermined by the presence of "automation bias" and the ease with which humans can become "cogs in a mechanised process" as a result.[55] This impression was further noted by Abraham when he observed that, in relation to Lavender, human input into such systems was, at best, perfunctory if not fatally curtailed: "One source stated that human personnel often served only as a "rubber stamp" for the machine's decisions, adding that, normally, they would personally devote only about '20 s' to each target before authorising a bombing — just to make sure the Lavender-marked target is male" (Abraham 2024).[56] The recursive, reciprocal priorities of a political will towards destruction, alongside the apparent calibration of "threshold values" to ensure an expanded definition of a "target", raises the all too real, if not inevitable, possibility that the affordances of AI apparatuses have become complicit in what many have identified as war crimes and crimes against humanity. In a move that tragically dovetails into the demand for automating systems of warfare, the phantasm of never-ending, perpetual threat tolerates the deployment of a technology, or an apparatus, that can not only enumerate targets quicker than humans but summon them forth based on the thanato-political logic of expendability.

In using the term "apparatus" to describe AI here, alongside its deployment in ATR, I am alluding to the sense in which Giorgio Agamben deploys it to understand how perceived states of emergency operate through apparatuses of disciplinary power: "apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, *they must produce their subject*" (Agamben 2009, p. 11. Emphasis added). Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, specifically the latter's conceptualisation of a *dispositif*, Agamben characterises an apparatus as a mechanism for not only *producing* a subject but doing so in direct response to a given, prescribed urgency.[57] When we consider the state of emergency, prompted by the seemingly existential threat posed by Hamas, under which the Israeli army have prosecuted the recent war in Gaza, we might want to enquire into how algorithmic apparatuses, in the service of platforms such as The Gospel and Lavender, produce their subject in the form of a "target" and in relation to a seemingly urgent, perpetual and projected need—the annihilation, that is, of a seemingly atavistic threat. The summoning forth of a target, the preliminary identification and peremptory generation of a subject-cum-target, further discloses the degree to which subjects—civilians or otherwise—are being impositioned, or rendered accountable, through an algorithmic process that,

[53] The statement, in Hebrew, can be found here: https://www.idf.il/המחלמ/תוצפה/תובתכה-לכ/המחלמה-ןמוי/תודיחי-ירתא-ריוואה-ליח-זיעידומה-קיגא-ל-הצ-תוחוכ-ופקתוהש-תורטמ-סיה-ליח/ Emphasis added. Interestingly, this statement also used the phrase "factory" in relation to its offer of a "glimpse of the IDF's target factory that operates around the clock" and also noted that "[i]t has been 27 days of combat that the IDF's target factory has been operating around the clock." Referred to as the Pillar of Fire project, which echoes the deployment of the so-called Pillar of Defense by Israel in Gaza in 2012, the statement further suggested that the "operational need is defined in all the combat arenas by the relevant command, and it is translated into a *large-scale criminalization effort* under the same sensitive complex at the base in the south of the country." (Emphasis added). All translation courtesy of Google.

[54] A recent article, drawing on research conducted by Airwars (2023), goes some way to defining what "according to requirement" might actually mean in respect of weighing civilian deaths against military objectives. Writing in *The New York Times* in April 2025, the authors of this article observed that in late 2023, the IDF deployed an AI-powered tool to locate Ibrahim Biari, a Hamas commander (Frenkel and Odenheimer 2025). Using information provided by an AI audio tool, designed to geolocate where Biari was making phone calls from, the IDF summarily ordered an attack that killed the Hamas commander and over 125 civilians including 69 children and 22 women. See Frenkel and Odenheimer 2025, and Airwars 2023.

[55] The latter phrase is quoted from Richard Moyes, a researcher who heads Article 36, who was cited in Davies et al. 2023.

[56] There is a fuller discussion to be had here that would take note of the following: to the extent that AI, in the context of ATR, is effectively a programmable apparatus that can rationalise data, adapt to it, and act upon it, it is important to highlight that Machine Learning (ML), a subset of AI, is a process of learning from data *without* a pre-given set of rules. Data is thus the primary means by which ML, as the name suggests, learns rather than through instruction per se. Algorithms, in this perspective, support ML to find patterns in data and make predictions independent of human input. In Deep Learning (DL), a type of Machine Learning, structures called neural networks are used to mimic how the human brain works. In the latter, a neural network can be understood to be an "algorithm" inasmuch the former learns by iteratively adjusting connections (weights) between artificial neurons. In both cases, decision-making is devolved to the rationalisation of input data through ML and DL.

[57] Throughout this relatively short essay, Agamben cites an interview with Foucault that was first published in 1975. In it, Foucault explains the apparatus (*dispositif*) as a "formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to *an urgent need*" (Foucault 1980, pp. 194–195. Emphasis added).

in part, answers to the exigencies exemplified in the zero-sum game of national security.[58]

Reconsidering the alibi of the human-in-the-loop defence

Strictly speaking, the human-in-the loop (HITL) describes how levels of human input, or interventions, are assimilated into an AI model to enhance the system's accuracy, reliability, and overall fairness. In the preceding discussion, however, it becomes more and more apparent that political expediencies, alongside martial dictates, are encoded into AI, so much so that that the operational agency of an algorithm can automatically summon forth targets according to questionable "requirements". The very conditions of probability and possibility through which targets emerge are discursively pre-defined in a statistical calculus that precludes, while apparently including, any meaningful instance of human intercession and moderation. Where such interventions do occur, they can be seen to be compliant with the paranoiac, but nonetheless strategic, projection of threat and the pursuit of a relentless war. As to the verifiable substance of human feedback, in the form of intelligence information or consequential intercession, that too can be viewed as merely a process of recalibrating the internal, systemic "threshold values" of algorithmic circuits so that they become complicit in the egregious lack of a clear distinction between a combatant and non-combatant.

We return here, in part, to the technical practicalities implied in a "highly flexible interpretation" of proportionality and discrimination in contemporary theatres of war, both being foundational to the legal restraints placed upon the militaries and governments alike. The suggestion that the presence of a hypothetical human-in-the-loop—a sentient entity offering timely and judicious oversight—who will moderate, if not halt, any failings or incorrect calculations is, as suggested, misleading if not disingenuous. If the HITL defence is to be fully understood to involve impartial, as opposed to routinely partial, input it needs to be tasked with prudent, accountable and sensible levels of supervision and corroboration. The idea, if not ideal, must be substantive rather than, as is the case in Gaza, aligned with "requirements" that are arguably the result of a political and ethnocratic will towards unmitigated and absolutist exemplars of occupation.[59]

If, as some have argued, the State of Israel is in the process of outsourcing responsibility for Gaza to private companies, an inclination that divulges the degree to which the ultimate "goal is to transfer moral and legal responsibility from Israel to [privately-owned] armed militias" (Landau 2024), then it is arguable that it has also outsourced its moral responsibility for the introduction of what appear to be, in all but name, automated systems of killing. The "technification" of the individual (operator) within the AI-powered apparatus of ATR, the renunciation of an accountable human agent in the name of an unaccountable machinic agency, not only leads to more rather than less violence but, arguably, the moral devaluation of both the target and those who use such weapons: "the process of killing with lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) is always a systematised mode of violence in which all elements in the kill chain—from commander to operator to target—are subject to a technification. This technification incentivizes a moral devaluation of those targeted, while also degrading the moral agency of those involved in the application of autonomous violence" (Renic and Schwarz, 2023, p. 322).[60]

If we fully consider the rhetoric involved in maintaining the delusion of a human-in-the-loop then we need to radically reconsider how human agency, redistributed across a mechanistic, self-adjusting, and potentially self-serving apparatus, has been irredeemably devolved to the purposive functioning and moral vacuum of algorithmic auguries. Has human intervention, we need to ask, merely become a prosthesis of sorts—an all-too compliant bystander, or proxy, driven by quotas and defined by an inability to

[58] We could further note here Agamben's discussion of the biopolitical intent to survey and designate abnormal behaviours in communities and populations more generally: "In the eyes of authority […] nothing looks more like a terrorist that the ordinary man" (Agamben 2009, p. 23).

[59] For a discussion of ethnocracy, a political system in which power is formally divided among ethnic or sectarian groups, in the context of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, see Yiftachel 2006. See also, Pappé 2017.

[60] The "technification" of the subject and the danger of unintended consequence was key to Norbert Wiener's cautionary comments on the delegation of human oversight to machinic projections: "It may be seen that the result of a programming technique of automatization is to remove from the mind of the designer and operator an effective understanding of many of the stages by which the machine comes to its conclusions and of what the *real tactical intentions* of many of its operations may be" (Wiener 1960, p. 1357. Emphasis added). Wiener's deliberations on the implicit dilemma of mechanical agency was pithily expressed elsewhere in the same essay and still hold a remarkable degree of purchase on present-day debates about AI and autonomous systems: "If we use, to achieve our purposes, a mechanical agency with whose operation we cannot efficiently interfere once we have started it, because the action is so fast and irrevocable that we have not the data to intervene before the action is complete, then *we had better be quite sure that the purpose put into the machine is the purpose which we really desire* and not merely a colorful imitation of it" (Wiener 1960, p. 1358. Emphasis added).

fully recognise the impact of such systems? In a move that sees accountability transferred to machinic configurations of automated targeting, does the quantification of human responsibility—the fatal impact of actual targeting—subsequently become morally and ethically occluded, and hence even more difficult to legally substantiate.[61] To the degree that we can characterise a human operator as the facilitator of a machinic logic (adjusting, that is, algorithmic predictions but not necessarily questioning them), it is thereafter difficult to see human input as being anything other than a rubber stamp exercise—an automated reaction to a machinic process that is performed with little to no critical thinking, scrutiny, or genuine decision-making.

If targeting platforms can automatically generate, rather than nominally identify, potential targets without human input (HITL), it follows that that the operative logic of The Gospel, Lavender and other ATR apparatuses function to not only classify and suggest potential targets but also produce them according to martial objectives (defeating an enemy) and political imperatives (prolonging a war), the latter priority—in the case of the Israel-Hamas war—being questionable at best.[62] It is from within this phantasmal space of eternal menace, where the calculation of a seemingly unsurpassable existential risk precipitates its summary eradication, that we can begin to detail how the widespread use of algorithmically induced targets is designed to project threat, ad infinitum, into the (un)foreseeable future.[63] If, as has been noted, the purported danger presented by Palestinians living in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza is viewed by the State of Israel as a recurring and ancient, if not ancestral, form of enduring threat, then it would appear that the operative logic of AI will continue to produce targets and offer up an unrelenting, legally reprehensible, and intrinsically implacable response—an alibi, in sum—that has been, to date, pursued without much by way of mercy or compassion.

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[61] For Schwarz "the human operator, embedded in complex digital ecologies encounters limits that hamper moral agency and decision-making capacities considerably and in turn complicate aspirations of human control. Instead, the human is cast in a diminished role within the human–machine complex, whereby *modes of reasoning are shaped along the techno-logics of algorithmic data processing*, and the conditions required for ethical decision-making are limited" (2021, 55. Emphasis added). For an overarching discussion of the problematic of human–machine communications and the ethics, or absence thereof, implied in the evolution of autonomous systems, see Suchman 1987.

[62] Following the announcement of a potential cease-fire proposal, in June 2024 the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated his seemingly abiding commitment to destroying Hamas before ending the war: "Israel's conditions for ending the war have not changed: the destruction of Hamas's military and governing capabilities, the freeing of all hostages and ensuring that Gaza no longer poses a threat to Israel." Benjamin Netanyahu, cited in McKernan, 2024a. This avowed ambition was explicitly questioned by Daniel Hegari, Israel's military spokesman, when he argued the following: "This business of destroying Hamas, making Hamas disappear – it's simply throwing sand in the eyes of the public," Hegari said. "Hamas is an idea, Hamas is a party. It's rooted in the hearts of the people – whoever thinks we can eliminate Hamas is wrong" (Hagari, cited in Watling 2024). Implicit in Hagari's statement is the suggestion that the avowed objectives of the war in Gaza—the destruction of Hamas—are effectively unachievable, and therefore Netanyahu's rationale for the prosecution of the war in Gaza is, at best, unconvincing if not downright suspect.

[63] In December 2023, Yoav Gallant, the Defence Minister of Israel, suggested that "when what the IDF did in Gaza becomes clear, that will also be *projected* on Judea and Samaria [West Bank]". Gallant, cited in Albanese 2024. Emphasis added.

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Anthony Downey : is Professor of Visual Culture at Birmingham City University, with a focus on the Middle East and Global South. He sits on the editorial boards of *Third Text*, *Digital War*, and *Memory, Mind & Media*, respectively, and is the series editor for Research/Practice (2019–ongoing). Recent and forthcoming publications include *Decolonising Vision: Algorithmic Anxieties and the Future of Warfare* (2026); *Trevor Paglen: Adversarially Evolved Hallucinations* (2024); *Falling Forward: Khalil Rabah—Works, 1995–2025* (2023), and *Topologies of Air: Shona Illingworth* (2022). Downey is the recipient of a series

of Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) awards, including a four-year multi-disciplinary project that focuses on cultural practice and educational provision for children with disabilities in Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Jordan (2021–2025).