ISGAP REPORT

Antisemitic Influence Campaigns: Project Nemesis

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PROJECT NEMESIS

Documenting the Networks of Zion

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Antisemitic Influence Campaigns: *Project Nemesis*

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Lead: A report about *Project Nemesis*, an antisemitic and anti-Zionist mis/disinformation campaign targeting Jews, pro-Israel advocates, and affiliated organizations.

Keywords: antisemitism, anti-Zionism, disinformation, influence campaign, propaganda.

Summary – Key Points

- Project Nemesis is a cross-platform influence campaign that seeks to blacklist Jews, pro-Israel advocates, related organizations, and critics of the BDS movement. (As of March 2022, its database lists over 150 individuals and organizations.)
- The organizers of *Project Nemesis* attempt to hide behind a digital veil of anonymity.
- Most information is presented in a misleading and/or fabricated manner (i.e. citing UNGA 3379 but hiding the fact it was revoked by UNGA 46/48).
- Project Nemesis circulates common antisemitic conspiracy theories, particularly those accusing Jews of controlling the media and global finance.
- Legal and social pressure must be put on platforms hosting *Project Nemesis*. (As of March 9, 2022, Twitter has suspended its account.)

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Introduction

Project Nemesis is a cross-platform influence campaign that seeks to blacklist Jews, pro-Israel advocates, and related organizations. The organizers of this project hide behind a veil of online anonymity and disseminate their de facto call for boycotts against Jews and Zionists through various social media platforms, including Telegram and Twitter. The project's main data repository is a website (https://projectnemesis.net) that claims that Israel is a "malignant" state, that Zionism is racism, and that those blacklisted by the project harm Palestinians and oppose the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Since all those listed in the database of *Project Nemesis* are presented as wicked and evil, one can assume that the word "Nemesis" was deliberately chosen as a subconscious marketing tool to create an associative link between Jews and evil in the minds of internet and social media users.

The aim of this report is to raise the alarm about *Project Nemesis* and its mis/disinformation campaign, reveal its social media presence, and counter some of the false information circulated by *Project Nemesis* accounts and its online supporters. The report is divided into three sections. The first section establishes the research framework and introduces several relevant concepts, including influence campaigns, social media, mis/disinformation, antisemitism, and anti-Zionism. The second section examines the cross-platform nature of *Project Nemesis* and the impact it has on those who are exposed to it. This section also discusses technical information and examples of false claims. The third and final section of this report presents some assumptions, conclusions, and recommendations in response to the questions: who is behind this campaign, what do they hope to achieve, and why? While some alt-right figures are discussed in this report, it is beyond my legal capacity to attempt to expose those behind this antisemitic project. However, I hope the present report will encourage legal experts and journalists to take action.

Research Framework: Influence Campaigns, Disinformation and Antisemitism

Why have those who operate *Project Nemesis* chosen to blacklist certain people and organizations while hiding behind a veil of online anonymity? If their project is legitimate, legal, and factually accurate, one might assume they would not need to hide their identities. However, I suspect that this project is neither legitimate, nor legal, nor factually accurate. *Project Nemesis* makes copious use of mis/disinformation – "fake news" – to achieve its aims, as apparent from its website:

"Israel is not a mere illegitimate occupation, but the result of a vast international network which enables its economic, political and cultural persistence. We seek to document this extensive criminal network, demonstrating that it is real, and in certain ways, as influential and malignant as Israel itself. **This is Project Nemesis**, where we document the Networks of Zion."²

The first sentence about the State of Israel and the "vast international network" resembles the infamous antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in that it implies that there is a Jewish plot for global domination. In addition, *Project Nemesis* not only documents the "Networks of Zion" but also disseminates them to hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. This "document and disseminate" strategy is frequently used by terror organizations and radical states in an attempt to influence people in a certain direction. In this particular case, that direction is against Jews and Israel.

Conspiracy theories and blood libels about Jews have been promoted all over the world for thousands of years. Throughout history, the belief in such falsehoods has motivated – and continues to motivate – people to discriminate against and/or harm Jews. Generally speaking, a conspiracy theory is a fabricated explanation for random events or behaviors that invokes a fictitious plot by sinister and powerful groups.³ Based on false and misleading information, *Project Nemesis* claims that the Jews and the State of Israel are involved in a conspiracy against the world and the Palestinians. This is an example of mis/disinformation:

² See "About Us" at https://projectnemesis.net/about-us/ (accessed March 10, 2022). See appendix if no longer available online.

³ See, generally, Jonathan Fox and Lev Topor, *Why Do People Discriminate Against Jews?* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

false or deliberately misleading and biased information that is purposely created to influence people.

Such mis/disinformation is often part of an influence campaign: a coordinated, integrated, and synchronized application of various social, political, economic, and informational tools that are used to influence the behavior and decisions of target audiences and persuade them to adopt a position that serves the interests of the organizers of the campaign.⁴ In the case of *Project Nemesis*, that position is ostensibly anti-Zionist. In practice, it also promotes antisemitism, both directly and indirectly, as discussed in this report.

While it is widely known that organizations such as BDS and Hamas and countries such as Russia and Iran engage in both anti-Zionism and antisemitism, the identity of those behind *Project Nemesis* is hidden behind digital walls. While it is technically possible to knock down these walls, or at least peek through them, my aim here is not to expose the organizers – at least not yet. My aim is to understand what lies behind the deployment of soft power by *Project Nemesis*. This is not the first time such soft power has been used against Israel and Jews.

Similar tactics are employed by the BDS movement, a Palestinian-led anti-Israel campaign that aims to delegitimize the opponents – or "nemesis" – of the Palestinians. While the BDS movement presents itself as legitimate and non-racist, it is designed to conceal its antisemitic tendencies. **Project Nemesis** similarly presents itself as non-racist. For example, it supposedly "does not blacklist people or entities based on their corresponding race or religion. **However*, many of its posts are reminiscent of traditional anti-Jewish blood libels or identify individuals as Jews. **To the property of the post of traditional anti-Jewish blood libels or identify individuals as Jews. **To the property of the post of traditional anti-Jewish blood libels or identify individuals as Jews. **To the property of the

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⁴ Cf. Eric V. Larson, Richard E. Darilek, Daniel Gibran, Brian Nichiporuk, Amy Richardson, Lowell H. Schwartz, and Cathryn Q. Thurston, *Foundations of effective influence operations: A framework for enhancing army capabilities* (Rand Arroyo Center, 2009), p. 2.

⁵ Lev Topor, "The Covert War: From BDS to Delegitimization to Antisemitism," *Israel Affairs* 27, no. 1 (2020), pp. 166-180.

⁶ See "Ethics Policy" at https://projectnemesis.net/ethics-policy/ (accessed March 10, 2022). See appendix if no longer available online.

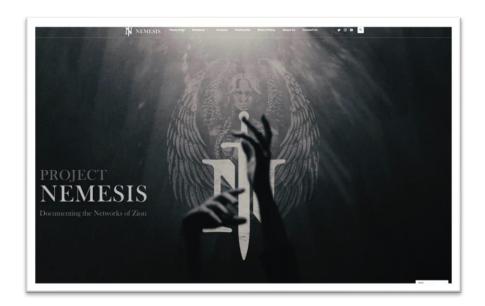
⁷ See "The Jew behind phony right-wing figures" in the appendix. Source: https://t.me/ProjectNemesis6692 (accessed March 10, 2022).

Project Nemesis – A Cross-Platform Campaign

The website of *Project Nemesis* is not just a blog, and its Telegram channel is not just a random channel. They are professionally designed, both in terms of their graphics and in terms of the privacy measures they employ. The organizers behind *Project Nemesis* employ sophisticated graphic designs, video tools, and privacy settings. It is unlikely that the project is a one-man project, as someone needs to write, edit, upload, and promote content on various platforms. Someone also needs to fund all these activities. It would therefore not be surprising if the individuals behind this project are affiliated with or supported by others.

The projectnemesis.net domain was registered on 6 May 2021, and the project's WordPress website was launched mid-2021.8 Other affiliated domains and hosting services are not listed here due to lack of sufficient evidence. As already mentioned, the identities of the individuals and organizations behind this project are hidden. They can only be revealed voluntarily or via exposure by legal measures. However, it is worth noting that some of the organizers and/or promoters behind the project have other websites, social media accounts, and Telegram channels where they constantly share material and posts. For instance, they circulate material between various Telegram channels.

Figure 1: Project Nemesis homepage9



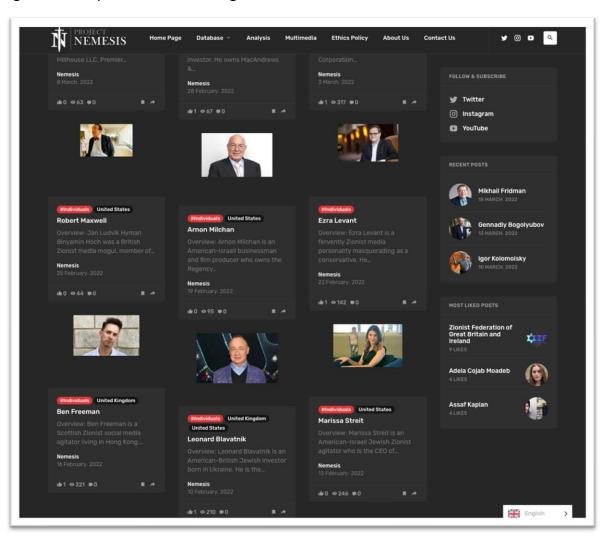
⁸ See https://whois.domaintools.com/projectnemesis.net (accessed March 10, 2022).

⁹ Source: https://projectnemesis.net (accessed March 10, 2022).

Targets of *Project Nemesis*

Who are the targets of *Project Nemesis*? While the website claims that it does not discriminate on the basis of race or religion and identifies the State of Israel as its main target, the word "Jew" appears with shocking regularity on its website, Telegram channel, and other social media accounts. In fact, the main targets of *Project Nemesis* are Jews, Jewish organizations, and those who either support Israel or criticize pro-Palestinian movements. Among the individuals listed in the project's database are politicians, businessmen, and activists such as former British MP Joan Ryan, pro-Israeli businessman Adam Milstein, and the director of the pro-Israel Sharaka Institute, Majid Al Sarrah. Many organizations are also listed in the database, including Labour Friends of Israel (LFI), the Virtual Embassy of Iraq in Israel, and the UAE-Israel Business Council (UIBC).

Figure 2: Examples of individual targets¹⁰



¹⁰ Source: https://projectnemesis.net/category/individuals/ (accessed March 10, 2022).

A list of the targets of *Project Nemesis*, including individuals and organizations, appears in the appendix. The theme uniting all non-Jewish individuals and organizations that are appear in this list is that they support Israel and the normalization process with the Jewish state. Their listing (or blacklisting) by *Project Nemesis* acts as a boycott mechanism that informs those who consume *Project Nemesis* content about individuals and organizations they should not cooperate with. Each target has its own page explaining why it should be boycotted and how it endorses the "Zionist" state. The database also uses labels to identify individuals, organizations, and locations. The United States and the United Kingdom are the most frequently cited locations (see Figure 2).

Cross-Platform Reach

Project Nemesis is an influence campaign – a marketing project – that disseminates mis/disinformation on various social media platforms (see examples below) in order to influence and persuade people worldwide, and particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom, to adopt anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli positions. It maintains a website, a Telegram channel, and Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram accounts.¹¹ While some of these social media channels are more effective than others, the overall reach of the campaign, which was launched in mid to late 2021, is worrisome. It is constantly growing in terms of views and subscribers. The use of multiple platforms not only enables those behind the project to reach different audiences but also conveys an added sense of credibility that is often lacking when similar content is disseminated by individuals. In other words, the individuals who operate *Project Nemesis* would be taken less seriously if they presented their anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish claims in isolation. Table 1 below presents some basic information on each platform.

Overall, the project's most significant platforms are its website and Telegram channel, although all five of its social media accounts were launched at the same time in November 2021. As of March 2022, 267,344 Telegram users had viewed antisemitic and anti-Zionist content on the *Project Nemesis* channel, which contains links to the project's website and other channels. However, the actual reach of *Project Nemesis* is much greater than it appears at first glance. Since alt-right figures such as Eric Striker, Keith Woods, Mike Peinovich, Mike

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¹¹ Archives and documentation, including chat exports, website metadata, screenshots, and third-party reports, are on file with the author. Please contact the author to review them.

Collett, and Tony Hovater and antisemitic channels like "/CIG/ Telegram | Counter Intelligence Global" repost content from *Project Nemesis* on Telegram, it can accumulatively attract millions of views.

Most of the social media accounts have different locations of origin, but the *Project Nemesis* website is hosted by Cloudflare, a very secure and robust hosting service provider. One can assume that the decision to use Cloudflare was a precautionary measure designed to protect the website against distributed denial of service attacks (DDoS) and other forms of interference.

Table 1: Reach and estimated reach of *Project Nemesis*, as of March 2022

	Website ¹²	Telegram ¹³	Twitter	YouTube	Instagram
Links/accounts	<u>Link</u>	<u>Link</u>	@ProjectNemesisO	<u>Link</u>	<u>Link</u>
Contact details on platform	Contact form	<u>Email</u>	N/A	<u>Email</u>	N/A
Date of launch	May 6, 2021	Nov. 10, 2021	Nov. 2021	Nov. 14, 2021	Nov. 2021
Location/host/ISP presented on platform	Cloudflare Inc. (US) website built on WordPress	N/A	Nazareth	Spain	N/A
Subscribers	N/A	905	366	20	65
Views/traffic	> 50,000	267,344	N/A	> 500	N/A

Examples of Mis/Disinformation and Antisemitism

Project Nemesis presents itself as a project that is critical of Israel. However, aside from this anti-Zionism, it also promotes antisemitism. Some of the information presented as fact by *Project Nemesis* is incorrect or has been stripped of all context. For example, in the "Ethics Policy" section of its website, *Project Nemesis* claims that the targets listed on its website are "Zionist and consequentially racist according to UNGA Resolution 3379." In reality, UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 of 1975 was itself an antisemitic document that was

Website information collected from ICANN (https://lookup.icann.org) and Similarweb (https://www.similarweb.com/website/projectnemesis.net/#overview) (accessed March 10, 2022).

¹³ Telegram information was collected from Popsters (https://popsters.com) between November 10, 2021, and March 8, 2022 (accessed March 10, 2022).

¹⁴ See "Ethics Policy" at https://projectnemesis.net/ethics-policy/ (accessed March 10, 2022). See appendix if no longer available online.

revoked by the United Nations in UNGA Resolution 46/48 of 1991.¹⁵ In addition, those targeted by *Project Nemesis* are accused of supporting "Zionism and Zionist supremacism, discrimination, terrorism, ... [t]he Mossad, AIPAC."

In a further example of classic antisemitism, *Project Nemesis* claims that the British Labour Party and its former leader Jeremy Corbyn were undermined by "Zionist" agents. One of the articles on the project's website is entitled "Zionist Influence Ops. in the UK's Labour Party." It claims that it was not actual antisemitism or bad politics that failed the Labour Party but Zionists: "As expected, the attacks took place using old-fashioned accusations of 'anti-Semitism."

Twitter suspended the account of *Project Nemesis* on March 9, 2022. Three days later *Project Nemesis* posted a message on Telegram accusing Jews of controlling the media and suspending the account (see Figures 3-4). Moreover, between March 3 and March 8, 2022, the top hashtags on the *Project Nemesis* Twitter account appeared to be (partial list): #am_Yisrael, #freepalestine, #zionist, #propaganda, and #pallywood.¹⁶

On its Telegram channel, *Project Nemesis* expresses explicit forms of antisemitism much more often than on its website, including classic antisemitic stereotypes about Jewish control of the media and global finance. For example, a post from December 28, 2021, reads as follows:

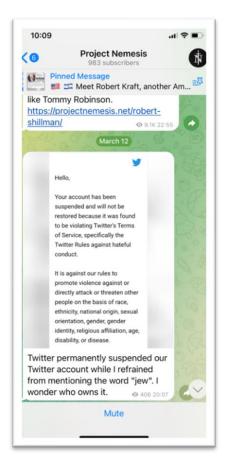
"Secular and Liberal Jews dominate the mainstream pro-Palestine narratives. I don't want to say that Jews who criticize Israel are liars but it's a wise plan in order to mitigate the pressure on Israel."

Furthermore, certain alt-right figures (see above) share and circulate antisemitic and anti-Zionist material through *Project Nemesis* as well as through their own and other anti-Zionist accounts and channels. On December 13, 2021, *Project Nemesis* shared a message from Keith Woods regarding the suspension of his Twitter account, including the reply: "Zionist takeover of the social media" (see Figure 4).

¹⁵ See Jonathan Fox and Lev Topor, *Why Do People Discriminate Against Jews?* (Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 99; Lev Topor, "The Covert War: From BDS to De-legitimization to Antisemitism," *Israel Affairs* 27, no. 1 (2020), pp. 166-180

¹⁶ Twitter analysis collected by SocioViz (https://www.socioviz.net) (accessed March 10, 2022).

Figure 3: Project Nemesis channel on Telegram blames Jews for Twitter suspension¹⁷ (left)



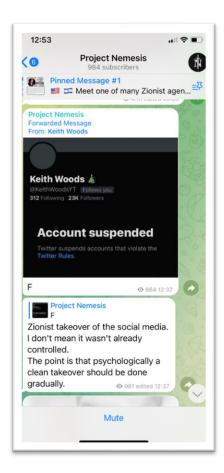


Figure 4: *Project Nemesis* claims that alt-right figure Keith Woods was suspended due to "Zionist takeover" (right)

In total, the word "Jew" (in all variations) appeared 71 times on the *Project Nemesis* Telegram channel between November 10, 2021 and March 12, 2022. In comparison, the word "Israel" (in all variations) appeared 128 times and the word "Zion" (in all variations) appeared 90 times during this period. This raises the question why it appears to be so important to *Project Nemesis* to mention that people are Jewish? The answer to this question is obvious, despite the fact that *Project Nemesis* claims not to "blacklist people or entities based on their corresponding race or religion." ¹⁹

¹⁷ Source: https://t.me/ProjectNemesis6692 (accessed March 10, 2022).

¹⁸ Source: https://t.me/ProjectNemesis6692 (accessed March 10, 2022).

¹⁹ See "Ethics Policy" at https://projectnemesis.net/ethics-policy/ (accessed March 10, 2022). See appendix if no longer available online.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This report does not claim to be the final say on the *Project Nemesis* mis/disinformation campaign. Instead, it aims to alert people worldwide to the existence of *Project Nemesis*, especially those who are directly targeted by it. Although the Twitter account of *Project Nemesis* was permanently suspended on March 9, 2022, the project still operates a website, a Telegram channel, and YouTube and Instagram accounts, as well as communicating by email.

As in the case of other anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish propaganda, whether from Nazi style populism or the allegedly progressive BDS movement, Jews continue to be targeted and blamed for the world's social and political problems. *Project Nemesis* is no different. It promotes conspiracy theories accusing Jews of controlling the media and global finance. Moreover, it does so in a hypocritical way by targeting Jews in a demonstrably racist manner while claiming not to be racist. If *Project Nemesis* wishes to promote legitimate criticism of the policies of a sovereign state, it should not be focusing on the religion of its targets. As demonstrated in this report, however, it clearly has other reasons for doing so.

One wonders why those behind *Project Nemesis* feel the need to hide behind a veil of digital anonymity if they believe that blacklisting Jews and pro-Israel activists is a legitimate activity. They may be alt-right figures, opponents of mainstream politics in the United States and the United Kingdom, BDS activists, or even a combination of the above. One thing that can be assumed about this influence campaign is that it requires knowledge and skills in the fields of social media, internet technology, and graphic design, as well as a certain amount of funding. This information may prove helpful when it comes to piercing the veil of digital anonymity.

Finally, it is worth reiterating that legal, social, and journalistic pressure is needed to expose those behind *Project Nemesis* and encourage the platforms and channels it uses to at the very least censor or label the mis/disinformation and racist/antisemitic material it disseminates. The project's main database and website should be nudged off Cloudflare, although this would probably encourage it to migrate to other hosting services or to the dark web.²⁰ YouTube and Instagram can be also nudged to suspend *Project Nemesis* as Twitter has

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²⁰ Extreme, criminal, racist, and antisemitic websites often undergo several iterations before they end up setting up a website on the dark web. For examples and reasons, see Lev Topor, "Dark Hatred: Antisemitism on the Dark Web," *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 2, no. 2 (2019), pp. 25-42.

already done. The biggest challenge is to convince Telegram to suspend *Project Nemesis*. This is because it currently does not censor or ban racist and antisemitic groups, despite the fact that it has already banned violent and extremist ones.

Appendix

Targets of <i>Project Nemesis</i> as presented on their website, as of March 15, 2022				
Individuals	Organizations			
Adam Milstein	A Wider Bridge			
Adela Cojab Moadeb	ACF (Alums for Campus Fairness)			
Al Anoud Al Hashmi	ADL (Anti-Defamation League)			
Alan Dershowitz	AICE (American-Israeli Cooperative			
Alberto Levy Abadi	Enterprise)			
Amit Deri	AIEF (American Israel Education)			
Amjad Taha	AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs			
Andre Lajst	Committee)			
Andres Isaac Roemer	Algemeiner Journal			
Arnon Milchan	Alpha Epsilon Pi			
Arsen Ostrovsky	BICOM (Britain Israel Communications and			
Asma Al-Atwi	Research Centre)			
Assaf Kalpan	Birthright Israel			
Avi Yemini	Canary Mission			
Ben Dror Yemeni	Club Z			
Ben Freedman	CUFI (Christians United for Israel)			
Ben Shapiro	Endowment for Middle East Truth			
Bernard Marcus	Fuente Latina			
Brian of London (Bishko)	Honest Reporting			
Brigitte Gabriel	IAM (Israel Advocacy Movement)			
Charles Kushner	Israel Christian Nexus			
Claudio Avruj	Israel in Iraq			
Damian Pachter	Jewish Awareness Movement			
Dan Feferman	Jewish News Syndicate			
Dany Saadia	Jewish Policy Center			
David Brog	Jewish Republican Alliance			
David Collier	Jews of Iraq			
David Harris	JIMENA (Jews Indigenous to the Middle			
Dov Alfon	East and North Africa)			
Elder of Zion	JINSA (Jewish Institute for National Security			
Ella Rose	of America)			
Eve Barlow	JLM (Jewish Labour Movement)			
Ezra Levant	LFI (Labour Friends of Israel)			
Fatema Al Harbi	MEMRI (Middle East Media Research			
Fernando Lottenberg	Institute)			
Gabriel Ben-Tasgal	MERONA			
Gabriel Colodro	Online Antisemitism Task Force			
Gabriel Zaliasnik	Palestinian Media Watch			
Gennadiy Bogolyubov	Philos Project			
Gerald Ronson	PragerU			
Gloria Garces	RJC (Republican Jewish Coalition)			
Haim Saban	Shemot Academy			
Igor Kolomoisky	SpaceIL			

Ira Rennert
Irving Gatell
Isaac de Castro
Izzy Lenga
Janet Rudman
Jeremy Leibler
Jeremy Newmark

Jillian Segal Joan Ryan

Jonathan Goldstein Jordan Schachtel Jordana Cutler Jorge Knoblovits Joseph Braude Joshua Rowe Juliet Moses

Keith Rupert Murdoch

Leah Soibel

Leonard Blavantik Leopold Noe Leopoldo Martinez Leslie Wexner

Linda Abdul Aziz Menuhin

Lorena Khateeb

Lucy Cosme Thormann

Luke Akerhurst Majid Al Sarrah Marcelo Isaacson Marcos Peckel

Mario Bramnick, Pastor

Marissa Streit Mashael Shemeri Mathias Inbar Meyer Habib

Michael Lawrence Davis

Mikhail Fridman Mithal Jamal al-Alusi Mortimer Zuckerman

Moti Ankari Najat Al Saied Nimrod Palmach Niran Bassoon Noor Dahri Ofir Ohayon Omar Al Busaidy Patrick Drahi Paul Singer StandWithUs Stop Antisemitism

Students Supporting Israel Sussex Friends of Israel

The Israel on Campus Coalition

The Kushner Family

UAE-Israel Business Council

UN watch

Virtual Embassy of Iraq in Israel

WINEP (Washington Institute for Near East

Policy)

Zachor Legal Institute

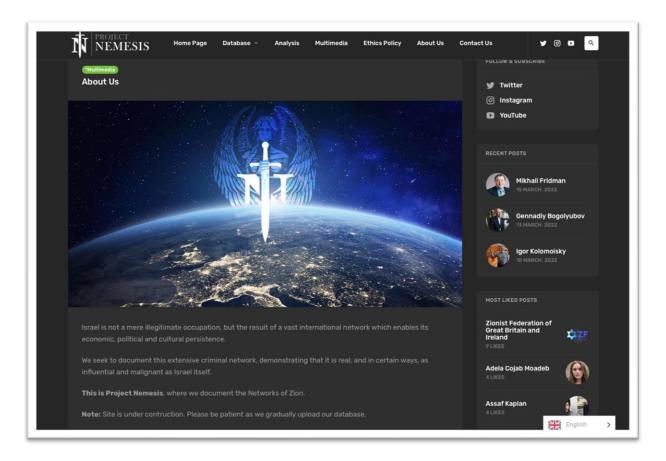
Zionist Federation of Great Britain and

Ireland

Peter Sweden (Imanuelsen)	
Poju Zabludowicz	
Ramy Attie	
Rene Terre Nova	
Robert Kraft	
Robert Maxwell	
Robert Shillman	
Roberta Moore	
Roberto Spindel	
Roland Perelman	
Roman Abramovich	
Ronald Steven Lauder	
Roni Kaplan	
Sammy Eppel	
Sapir Miz Levi	
Sarah Idan	
Seth Klarman	
Shai Masot	
Sheldon Adelson	
Smadar Elani	
Thani Al Shirawi	
Trevor Chinn	
Trevor Pears	
Vincent Tchenguiz	
Yohann Taieb	
Yoni Greenwald	
Yosef Garmon, Rav	
Zak Gertler	

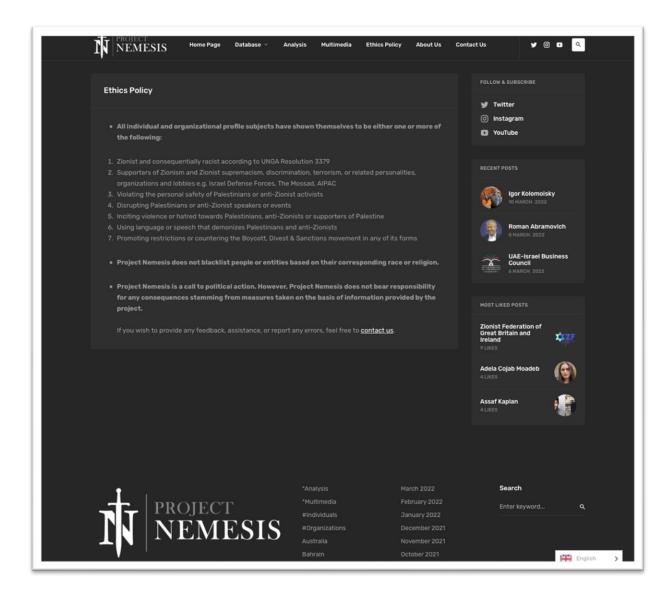
Project Nemesis – "About Us"

Source: https://projectnemesis.net/about-us/ (accessed March 10, 2022).



Project Nemesis – "Ethics Policy"

Source: https://projectnemesis.net/ethics-policy/ (accessed March 10, 2022).



Source: https://t.me/ProjectNemesis6692 (accessed March 10, 2022).



Founded in 2004, the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) is the first interdisciplinary research center dedicated to the study of antisemitism to be established in North America. Its mission is to explore antisemitism from a wide range of approaches and perspectives within an academic framework, including the study of such topics as the changing historical phases of antisemitism, how antisemitism relates to other forms of hatred, to what extent it is unique, how some societies are able to resist antisemitism, and how policies can be developed and implemented to combat it.

