

BORDER DIVESTMENT LIST

METHODOLOGY

people & planet



1. THE BORDER INDUSTRY

Although governments are responsible for creating immigration policy, they are outsourcing the implementation of most of this violence to the private sector. Thus the border regime relies on a vast network of hundreds of companies, many of which are household names. These firms provide and develop the technologies and labour required to make the hostile environment a reality, as well as playing a significant role in promoting these policies and the alarmist, racist, xenophobic narratives which feed into them. **Collectively, these firms make up the Border Industry, which is the target of our campaign.**

The categorization of the border industry underpinning the People & Planet [Border Divestment List \(BDL\)](#) is mainly based on the [Transnational Institute's Financing Border Wars Report](#) (Akkerman 2021). We differentiate between 5 categories of reprehensible corporate activities that companies engage in:

- 1) Border Security and Control** - The technological infrastructure of security and surveillance at borders, as well as the provision of the personnel who staff them
- 2) Border Surveillance** - The use of a broad range of (newer) technologies including biometrics, AI and phone and social media tracking to record, control and prevent the movement of people.
- 3) Deportation** - The (usually involuntary) removal of people from a country, often by force.
- 4) Detention** - The deprivation of liberty for migration-related reasons
- 5) Advisory and Audit Services** - The provision of support services which are invaluable to the operation of the above activities

You can find more information about the violence inherent in each of these sectors within our [Divest Borders Action Guide](#). In this document we discuss the process by which we determined the border industry companies from which universities must divest.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 COMPANY IDENTIFICATION

To identify companies with links to the border industry, we mainly consulted existing reports and research output about different segments or geographies of the border industry. Those included the reports of the [Transnational Institute \(TNI\)](#), the [AFSC's Investigate Borders Research database](#) and [Divest For Immigrant Justice List](#), and a [report from Privacy International](#). We also did desk research to identify additional companies mostly with links to the UK and EU border regimes.

The geographical focus of the BDL is on the UK, the US-Mexican border (mainly based on research by AFSC and TNI) and Europe (incl. the Mediterranean Sea).

2.2 COMPANY ASSESSMENT: EVALUATION PROCESS AND INCLUSION CRITERIA

While there are fossil fuel companies that can relatively easy be identified (and included on the fossil fuel divestment list) by looking at how much the business model relies on the production and sales of crude oil, natural gas, and thermal coal (or the size of yet unproduced fossil fuel reserves), there are no 'border companies' as such.

That is why the decision over a company's inclusion in the People & Planet Border Divestment List (BDL) was made based on an evaluation of six quantitative and qualitative criteria (see *Table 1*) that seek to capture the extent of which a company is involved in the border industry. **Our aim is to identify publicly listed companies which engage in corporate activities that play a significant role in the construction and/or operation of border infrastructures (physical and digital).**

2.2.1 EVALUATION PROCESS

We evaluate companies based on all criteria for which information is publicly available. Our two key criteria are if there is **quantitative or qualitative evidence that the company in question engages in corporate activities that characterise the border industry**. We used further criteria to evaluate

- a) the extent to which the corporate activities related to the border industry are important (that is, financially material or strategic) to the company itself
- b) the extent to which the corporate activities related to the border industry are important for the public authority purchasing goods/services.

By taking this lens, we included companies on the BDL for which corporate activities related to the border industry only account for a small share of their operations (or revenues) **but whose services are vital for the construction and/or operation of border infrastructures**. For instance, we included large tech companies such as Amazon and Microsoft because public authorities such as the US Government increasingly rely on their IT service and cloud infrastructure to operate immigration and identity databases. In the US, the Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology System (HART) - which is the Department of Homeland Security's central identity database - has been hosted by Amazon on its Amazon Web Services platform (AFSC Research 2021). Although the service in question might only

account for a small share of Amazon’s total revenues (figure is unclear as the company does not disclose this information), the cloud service is vital to the operation of the digital infrastructure that enables the US Border System.

We made the final decision which companies to include in the BDL on a company-by-company basis after carefully considering the assessments of the six criteria outlined below. Our inclusion criteria did not consider the feasibility of engagement with companies as an alternative to divestment, as this strategy is not available to our student groups. As a result, our list includes a wider range of companies than that of the AFSC.

2.2.2 INCLUSION CRITERIA

Table 1: Six quantitative and qualitative criteria to evaluate if companies should be included on BDL

Quantitative criteria	Financial materiality: is the reprehensible corporate activity financially material for the company in question? (>10% of total annual revenues)
	Is it possible to quantify monetary contract values related to the reprehensible corporate activity?
Qualitative criteria	Is there qualitative evidence of reprehensible corporate activities?
	Is the corporate activity part of a separate business unit, product group, and/or of strategic importance for the company in question?
	Is the company in question directly or indirectly involved in active lobbying efforts to influence policy making in favor of the border industry in general and/or the specific reprehensible corporate activity in question?
	To what extent are government authorities dependent on purchasing the corporate activity from the company in question?

QUANTITATIVE CRITERIA

FINANCIAL MATERIALITY: IS THE CORPORATE ACTIVITY FINANCIALLY MATERIAL FOR THE COMPANY IN QUESTION? (>10% OF TOTAL REVENUES)

Here we assess to what extent the corporate activities linked to the border industry are financially material for the company in question based on an evaluation of publicly available information such as annual reports or investor presentations. We define financially material corporate activities as those that generate more than 10% of total annual revenues. Only a few companies report directly on revenues generated from the sales of goods and/or services that are directly linked to the border industry.

For instance, the American prison and detention centre operator CoreCivic reported that 29% of all revenues in 2019 came from contracts with the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. For some companies we took as a proxy the revenue share of a corporate sub-division that

engages in border-related activities and on that the company reports. For instance, the French arms and weapons manufacturer Thales reports that 48% of its total revenues in 2020 were generated by the Defence and Security division, while 18% came from Digital Identify and Security. As a leading supplier of both weapon systems and biometric identity and digital security services (through its subsidiary Gemalto), both corporate divisions are relevant and were thus taken into account.

For arms and weapon manufacturers or defence contractors which 1) engage in corporate activities linked to the border industry and 2) are identified by and listed on the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's SIPRI Top 100 Arms-producing and Military Services Companies List (2018), we took the estimated share of arms sold in relation to total annual revenues in 2019 as reported by SIPRI as a proxy to assess the financial materiality of border-related activities.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO QUANTIFY MONETARY CONTRACT VALUES RELATED TO THE REPREHENSIBLE CORPORATE ACTIVITY

Here we assess publicly available information about the monetary contract values that companies generate by selling their border-related goods or services to public authorities. Besides total monetary contract values, we also take into account the nature of the goods and/or services provided and contract length.

QUALITATIVE CRITERIA

IS THERE QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE OF REPREHENSIBLE CORPORATE ACTIVITIES?

Here we assess publicly available qualitative information about border-related corporate activities that companies engage in.

IS THE CORPORATE ACTIVITY PART OF A SEPARATE BUSINESS UNIT, PRODUCT GROUP, AND/OR OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE FOR THE COMPANY IN QUESTION?

Here we assess to what extent the corporate activity in question is strategically important for the company in question. To do that, we identify if the border-related activities are part of a separate business unit, product group, and/or if the company highlights its strategic importance on the company website or in investor communications.

IS THE COMPANY IN QUESTION DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN ACTIVE LOBBYING EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE POLICY MAKING IN FAVOUR OF THE BORDER INDUSTRY IN GENERAL AND/OR THE SPECIFIC REPREHENSIBLE CORPORATE ACTIVITY IN QUESTION?

Here we assess companies' lobbying efforts primarily based on the TNI reports outlined below, the AFSC Investigate Research database, and the Lobbying Fortress Europe report of the NGO Corporate Europe Observatory. We also tracked if companies in question were part of major industry lobbying groups to advance the agenda of the border industry, such as the European Organisation for Security. Further we used other sources such as the [opensecrets.org](https://www.opensecrets.org) lobbying database.

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DEPENDENT ON PURCHASING THE CORPORATIVE ACTIVITY FROM THE COMPANY IN QUESTION?

Here we examine to what extent public authorities are dependent on purchasing from private companies products or services linked to the border industry. We used this criterion primarily to

qualify another dimension of the crucial role that large tech corporation such as Amazon and Microsoft play in the Border-Industrial complex through providing cloud infrastructure on which public authorities such as the US Government increasingly rely.

In the first version of the BDL, we applied this criterion only to the largest tech companies as well as some key upcoming players such as Palantir. For the next iteration of the BDL, we aim further develop our methodology to assess all companies according to the extent to which government authorities are dependent on purchasing their goods and services to construct and/or operate digital and physical border infrastructure.

3. LIMITATIONS

We acknowledge that the resulting list of companies is not comprehensive and do not claim that it captures all companies engaged in activities related to the border industry in the geographies outlined above.

Firstly, our BDL doesn't include any companies which are not publicly traded, as these companies cannot be invested in or divested from. While there are a number of these companies who are key players in the industry, they are not within reach of this campaign.

Additionally, this version of the BDL does not include all airline companies who are complicit in deportation, but currently only those who are the most active in this area. Further, the list does also not include banks and institutional investors that provide debt finance (e.g., loans or bonds) to companies listed on the BDL and thus provide the latter with crucial financial sources to advance border infrastructure projects. We aim to include both groups of companies in the next iteration of the list.

4. MAIN SOURCES

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