

UK government providing weapons for Gaza genocide despite formal suspension of arms exports to Israel

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Analysis of trade data shows that despite the UK government suspending export licenses to Israel, the UK arms industry continues to export military equipment, including munitions.

Research indicates that 14 shipments of military items have left the UK for Israel since October 2023, including 13 by air to Ben Gurion airport and one maritime delivery to Haifa that alone contained 160,000 items. Since September 2024, 8,630 items were exported under the category “bombs, grenades, torpedoes, mines, missiles and similar munitions of war and parts thereof—other”.

The Starmer Labour government suspended 30 arms export licences in September last year. But research reveals that from October 2023 to March 2025, the UK sent armaments to Israel including F-35 fighter jet parts.

Arms manufacturers in the UK engineer approximately 15 percent of every F-35 and there have been multiple shipments of F-35 components from the UK to Israel since the destruction of Gaza began.

The F-35 is a multi-role stealth combat fighter, widely used by the Israeli air force since 2017. Israeli F-35 jets have been used to kill tens of thousands of people in Iran, Yemen, Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. F-35s have accumulated over 15,000 operational flight hours since October 2023, participating in the genocide across Gaza and hundreds more deadly raids across the Middle East

The Israeli air force has deployed F-35s utilising “Beast Mode”, whereby heavier bomb loads including 2,000-pound bombs are carried on underwing pylons. In July 2024, for instance, an Israeli F-35 dropped three 2,000-pound bombs on a camp for displaced people in

Gaza's Al Mawasi, killing at least 90 Palestinians.

The research revealing the ongoing arms trade, *Exposing UK Arms Exports to Israel*, was conducted by the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), Progressive International, and Workers for a Free Palestine. The research findings were released on May 7, a day when at least 92 Palestinians were killed by Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip, including a strike on a market and restaurants and another targeting a school sheltering displaced people in the Al-Tuffah neighbourhood.

The PYM researchers reviewed import data published by the Israel Tax Authority (ITA) covering the period from October 2023 to March 2025. Licensing data published by the UK's Export Control Joint Unit of the Department for Business and Trade was also scrutinised.

Analysis of data generated by the ITA highlights a wide range of shipments of military goods, munitions, arms, and aircraft parts from the UK to Israel. The Labour government's suspension of 30 arms export licences for offensive use in Gaza left 200 arms licences in place. It also included an exception for F-35 parts, saying national security required that the F-35 supply chain remain intact with nothing being allowed to get in the way of NATO's war on Russia.

The suspensions were said to be due to a clear risk that Israel “might” use the arms to commit serious breaches of international humanitarian law. Ministers have repeatedly assured that the arms export licences remaining in place did not cover materials for use in Gaza. The Foreign Office has not published details of what the continuing licences cover.

The PYM research reveals what the continuance of

200 arms export licences has allowed Israel to import. The Israeli tax authority data provides a code number identifying the type of export, details on country of origin, the value of the items, the month shipped and whether transported by land or sea. Neither the supplier nor customer is listed. The data show shipments of military goods, munitions of war, and arms or arms parts falling under classifications of:

- Bombs, grenades, torpedoes, mines, missiles and similar munitions of war and parts thereof
- Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols
- Parts and accessories of shotguns and rifles
 - Rocket launchers; flame-throwers; grenade launchers; torpedo tubes and similar projectors
- Tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles, motorised whether or not fitted with weapons, and parts of such vehicles. This includes a shipment of 150,000 bullets to Israel in October 2023

Direct shipments of F-35 parts from the UK to Israel between October 2023 and August 2024 are observed in the data. Data analysis displays no observable decrease in the shipment of aircraft parts. It suggests that such shipments are ongoing as of March 2025.

Speaking on exports to Israel in the House of Commons, UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy stated that “much of what we send is defensive in nature.”

“It is not,” Lammy insisted, “what we describe routinely as arms,” adding that he did not “think anyone would suggest that we should not sell a helmet or goggles to one of our closest allies.”

At the time of announcing the suspension, Starmer’s government admitted shipping components for F-35 jets directly to Israel would present a “clear risk” of contributing to Israel’s violations of international law.

A Foreign Office spokesperson said of the arms suspensions, in Orwellian language, “The only exception is the F-35 programme due to its strategic role in NATO and wider implications for *international peace and security*. Any suggestion that the UK is licensing other weapons for use by Israel in the war in Gaza is misleading. *The UK totally opposes an expansion of Israel’s military operations in Gaza.*” (emphasis added)

The UK has been caught red handed enabling Israel’s violations of international law and therefore violating its own obligations under international law. Starmer’s government is guilty of war crimes.



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