

# Marseille-Fos dockers block arms shipment to Israel

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On June 4, dockworkers in the port of Marseille-Fos refused to load a container containing spare parts used to make machine guns and cannon tubes onto a ship bound for Israel. This initiative by the Marseille dockers underlines the determination of the working class to go on the offensive against the genocide in Gaza and against the imperialist governments complicit in this crime.

The action taken by the dock workers in the Mediterranean port is an expression of the broad international opposition of the working class to the genocide in Gaza, which is seeking to take up a struggle. It has found a strong echo among other sections of workers internationally.

In a press release, the CGT union at the Marseille-Fos ports said it did not want to “take part in the ongoing genocide orchestrated by the Israeli government.”

It added, “We were disgusted to discover two other containers that were due to be loaded onto the ‘Contship Era.’ According to our information, they were cannon tubes manufactured by Aubert et Duval in Firminy (Loire). The port of Fos ... must not be used to ship munitions or weapons for any war whatsoever. The workers of the port of Fos do not want to be complicit in massacres and the loss of human life.”

Other CGT federations, including the customs union, have lent their support to the action by the Fos-sur-Mer dockers. “Customs officers do not want to be accomplices in this genocide,” they wrote in a press release on Friday, adding: “Customs can put in place an export ban on arms and armaments, so let’s do it!”

Dockworkers in Genoa (Italy), where the “Contship Era” stopped on June 7, checked that “the agreements reached with the Marseille dockworkers have been respected,” as they noted on their Facebook page. The ship sparked further protests at the Italian ports of

Salerno and Scilla.

This is not the first time that such a trade union movement has affected European ports since October 7, 2023. Only a month later, dockworkers in the port of Barcelona refused to load ships containing weapons bound for Israel.

The investigative website Disclose revealed that an Israeli cargo ship was due to call at Fos-sur-Mer on Thursday, June 5, carrying 19 pallets containing 14 tonnes of parts for machine-gun cartridges. The cargo ship was then due to call at the port of Genoa, then Salerno, before heading for Haifa in Israel.

As Disclose reveals: “These spare parts, called links, are manufactured in Marseille by the French company Eurolinks. Used to link automatic weapon bullets together, they were ordered by Israel Military Industries (IMI), a subsidiary of Elbit Systems, one of Israel’s leading arms manufacturers. The company, which describes itself as ‘the exclusive supplier to the Israeli Defence Forces,’ supplies Tsahal [the Israeli army] with small and large calibre bullets.” Disclose reports that in October 2023, with the authorisation of the French government, Eurolinks exported 100,000 links from its factory in Marseille.

In addition to parts for submachine guns, the cargo ship was to carry spare parts produced by Aubert et Duval, a company whose shareholders include Airbus and Safran, and used to equip cannons. According to the investigative website Disclose, this is the third shipment between Fos-sur-Mer and Haifa since the beginning of 2025.

Army Minister Sébastien Lecornu told a press conference that these deliveries were intended for “re-export” to customers in Israel. As the Disclose website points out: “This statement is identical to the one made at the time by [Eurolinks CEO] Jean-Luc Bonelli to

Disclose: ‘The licences granted to us by the [French] authorities oblige IMI to use our links only for cartridges intended for their foreign customers. But, by the manufacturer’s own admission, no checks have been carried out by the French embassy in Tel Aviv to verify the identity of the final recipient.’

The Macron government cannot claim not to know that these weapons are used by the Israeli army. The machine gun for which these parts are reportedly compatible is used in Gaza and was used by the Israeli army in the “flour massacre” of February 29, 2024, when more than a hundred Palestinian civilians were killed near a humanitarian convoy. Eurolinks head Bonelli declined to comment.

The French government is embarrassed by this blocking of military equipment, as it has ratified the orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and resolution 55/L.30 of the Human Rights Council, which states that “the Palestinian people face a grave risk of genocide” and orders Israel and the ratifying states to do everything possible to prevent it. Lecornu claims that these weapons are going to Israel temporarily to cover up his responsibility for the genocide in Gaza and avoid exposing himself to the wrath of the workers.

Manuel Bompard, La France insoumise (LFI) MP for the Bouches-du-Rhône department, wrote on the social media X: “Glory to the dockers of the port of Marseille-Fos, everywhere in the world, the fight is being organised against the genocide in Gaza!” LFI-leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon posted a similar message, calling for an “embargo now on the weapons of genocide.”

The Marseille-Fos dockers’ initiative must be the first step in a widespread working class movement against genocide, but not the only one. The imperialist governments of Europe and America are complicit in the crimes committed in Gaza as part of their wars for a “new Middle East” under their direct domination.

Despite the union bureaucracy’s and the pseudo-left’s hailing of the dockers, these organisations block the generalisation of such a movement. Since the beginning of the genocide, the CGT has not sought to mobilise workers against it, despite workers’ opposition. The union bureaucracy was forced to react to the Disclose investigation because anger is spreading among the dockworkers in Marseille-Fos over the genocide.

Within the framework of “social dialogue,” the union

bureaucracy is negotiating the imposition on workers of the Macron government’s policy, which is releasing tens of billions of euros for the war economy through drastic austerity measures. In 2023, when two-thirds of the French people wanted to oust Macron and defeat his attack on pensions, the trade union apparatuses started talking to Macron, leaving him to put an end to the strikes through police repression.

Despite its denunciations of the genocide, LFI has allied itself, within the framework of the Nupes [Nouvelle Union populaire écologique et sociale], with Hollande’s Socialist Party, which fiercely defends Netanyahu’s regime against the Palestinians. The pseudo-left has no intention of mobilising workers, but wants to subordinate their opposition to the genocide to the trade union bureaucracy.

The arms blockade by the Marseille-Fos dockers must be the start of an international political struggle against the genocide and the imperialist powers. To achieve this, workers must break with the union bureaucracy and form their own organisations by joining the International Workers Alliance of Action Committees and building the Parti de l’égalité socialiste (PES) in France as the section of the ICFL.



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