

Germany temporarily halts arms deliveries to Israel: Chancellor Merz gives himself an alibi

Peter Schwarz
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The decision by Chancellor Friedrich Merz to temporarily halt certain arms exports to Israel is a transparent attempt to distract from the government's support for monumental war crimes. It will not change Germany's support for the genocide against the Palestinians.

Merz has merely vaguely announced that “until further notice no exports of military equipment that can be used in the Gaza Strip will be “approved.” He has not explained what will happen to weapons that have already been approved but not yet delivered, nor how to deal with weapons that are being used for the expulsion of the Palestinian population from the West Bank.

All weapons that “serve the self-defence of Israel” are explicitly excluded from the export stop. This includes, among other things, air defence and naval defence—that is, ships, submarines, reconnaissance and missile technology. “In all these areas Israel will, of course, continue to be supported to the best of our ability,” stressed Chancellery Chief of Staff Thorsten Frei.

Merz himself never tires of emphasising that nothing will change in Germany's relationship with Israel. “The principles of German Israel policy are unchanged,” he said on Sunday in an interview with broadcaster ARD. “We will continue to help this country to defend itself.” Germany and Israel were agreed on who the aggressor is in the Gaza war: “The cause is called Hamas. It is the terrorism of Hamas.”

The official statement from the Chancellery on the approval stop begins with the words: “Israel has the right to defend itself against the terror of Hamas. ... The disarmament of Hamas is essential. Hamas must play no role in the future of Gaza.”

Now, Merz raises his finger admonishingly towards Jerusalem because the genocidal character of Israel's

actions can simply no longer be denied. For almost two years, the German government categorically rejected all alarm calls from aid organisations, UN institutions and other bodies. Anyone who protested against or even dared to criticise Israeli war crimes was—and still is—persecuted. Merz himself had declared during the election campaign that he would welcome Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to Germany despite an existing international arrest warrant.

After months of Israel blockading all aid deliveries, and pictures of starving children appeared even in the heavily censored German media, this line could no longer be maintained. While the Israeli army continued to block thousands of lorries carrying aid for Gaza, two Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) aircraft dropped aid supplies over Gaza by parachute—a purely symbolic gesture sharply criticised by aid organisations for its ineffectiveness and danger.

The decision of the Israeli Security Cabinet to escalate the war and militarily occupy Gaza City prompted Merz to announce restrictions on arms exports. The chancellor, who has access to extensive intelligence information, knows why.

After the Israeli army has killed at least 60,000 people in the Gaza Strip and wounded 150,000—the majority women and children—90 percent of the population has been displaced, often several times, and four-fifths of all buildings have been destroyed or damaged, a far greater war crime is now imminent.

Merz said in the ARD interview: “We cannot deliver weapons into a conflict that could claim hundreds of thousands of civilian victims, that requires the evacuation of the entire city of Gaza. Where are these people supposed to go?”

If even Germany's pro-Israel chancellor speaks of hundreds of thousands more civilian victims, this must

be taken seriously. An estimated 1 million people are still eking out an existence in the wasteland of ruins called Gaza City, which is now to be turned into a battlefield. According to Netanyahu's plans, they are now to be driven into a tiny ghetto in the southwest of the Gaza Strip, where hundreds of thousands are already languishing under concentration-camp-like conditions.

Merz has no objection to this, as his continuing declarations of support for Israel show. However, he is trying to provide himself with an alibi because he fears that the growing outrage could bring down his shaky government and those of his allies in France, Britain and the Arab countries.

Germany is not only an accomplice but a perpetrator in the genocide in Gaza. It is, after the United States, the second largest arms supplier to Israel. Between 2019 and 2023, 30 percent of Israel's imports of heavy conventional weapons came from Germany, including corvettes, submarines, tank parts and missiles. Since the beginning of the genocide in Gaza, Germany has delivered arms worth almost half a billion euros to Israel. This emerges from the government's answer of May 26, 2025, to a parliamentary question from the Left Party.

Germany's support for Israel has nothing to do with its responsibility for the murder of 6 million Jews, with which this support is repeatedly justified. Claiming the justification of the murderous campaign of the Israeli army as recompense for the Shoah is repulsive. Responsibility for the Shoah does not oblige Germany to support another genocide.

Like the United States, Germany uses Israel as an armed bridgehead for its geopolitical and economic interests in the Middle East. In order to become a "war-capable" world power again, the government is prepared to commit any crime.

Merz's timid attempt to give himself an alibi has met with fierce opposition among the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU). Numerous leading Christian Democrats believe that such consideration for public opinion is no longer appropriate and that even the greatest war crimes must be openly supported.

CDU foreign policy expert Roderich Kiesewetter described Merz's decision as "a grave political and strategic mistake." By suspending arms exports, "one is bowing to an antisemitic mob in the streets that also

threatens Jewish life in Germany," he railed on X. Alluding to an earlier statement by Merz, the chairman of the Christian Democratic youth movement Junge Union, Johannes Winkel, wrote, "As of today Israel does the dirty work for us, only without German weapons."

There is also seething outrage in the CDU's sister party, the Bavarian CSU. The CSU parliamentary group leader in the state parliament, Klaus Holetschek, described the arms stop as "a mistake with fatal consequences." CSU honorary chairman Horst Seehofer spoke of "a wrong decision" and a "foreign policy mistake" that would have long-lasting effects.

Green politician Volker Beck, now president of the German-Israeli Society, also sharply criticised Merz. Like many of those quoted above, Beck has long been one of the most aggressive warmongers against Russia.

The Left Party, as usual, used Merz's decision to sow illusions that the government could be dissuaded from its war course through persuasion or pressure from below. Left Party federal managing director Janis Ehling described the approval stop as long overdue and called on the government to take further steps, such as recognising Palestine as a state. Foreign policy spokesperson Lea Reisner demanded that the federal government act decisively and suspend the EU Association Agreement with Israel.

In reality, the escalation of genocide in the last two years proves that only an independent movement of the international working class, not an appeal to capitalist governments, can stop war and genocide. This requires a political break with all capitalist parties and their pseudo-left defenders and the building of a socialist party that combines the struggle against war, dictatorship and social cuts with the fight to overthrow capitalism—the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) and the Fourth International.



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