

Report reveals UK keeps sending arms to Israel despite ban



London, May 8 (RHC)-- A new report says Britain keeps exporting arms and equipment, including F-35 fighter jet parts, to Israel despite a government suspension in September 2024. The report released by three campaign groups says parts for the jet, which has been critical for Israel's brutal military campaign in Gaza, appear to have arrived in Israel as recently as March.

Investigation using Israeli customs data says 8,630 munitions items were sent from the UK to Israel since the suspensions. The munitions fall under a category of import labelled "bombs, grenades, torpedoes, mines, missiles, and similar munitions of war and parts thereof."

Most of the shipments cited in the report happened after the government's arms suspension.

Britain had said it suspended its direct exports over concerns they might be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law. Soon after the suspensions, Foreign Secretary David Lammy told parliament that "much of what we send is defensive in nature. It is not what we describe routinely as arms."

"On the basis of the evidence in this report, it appears that Lammy has misled parliament and the public about arms shipments to Israel," according to the report.

Nearly two dozen MPs have written to Lammy, calling on him to come before parliament to respond to the allegations. They said that the public "deserves to know the full scale of the UK's complicity in crimes against humanity."

"We urge the government to disclose the details of all arms exports to Israel since October 2023 and to immediately halt all arms exports to Israel," they wrote. "This could not be more urgent given the risk that British-made weapons could be used to enact Netanyahu's plan to annex Gaza and ethnically cleanse the Palestinian people."

Former Labor shadow chancellor and MP John McDonnell and MP Zarah said the findings showed the government "has been lying to us about the arms it is supplying to Israel while it wages genocide in Gaza."

"Far from 'helmets and goggles,' the government has been sending thousands of arms and ammunition goods and [is] even still supplying components of the world's most lethal fighter jets," she said.

Emily Apple, media coordinator for the UK-based Campaign Against Arms Trade, said the report had shattered the claim that the UK arms export regime is transparent.

"Our arms export regime is not fit for purpose and this government is complicit in Israel's horrific war crimes. Time and again, it has either refused to act or manufactured loopholes to prioritize arms trade profits over Palestinian lives. This has to stop," Apple said.

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