

CAAT NEWS

The quarterly magazine for Campaign Against Arms Trade

Issue 269
Summer 2024



STOP THE ARMS SALES, STOP THE KILLING

PLUS

Weaponising Universities **P3**

Stop arming Israel **P6-7**

Defend the right to protest **P14**



**CAMPAIGN
AGAINST
ARMS
TRADE**

Since the last issue of CAAT News the humanitarian situation in Gaza has deteriorated even further. Israeli forces have inflicted collective punishment and war crimes on a civilian population, with serious allegations of genocide.

At the time of writing the UK government is continuing to arm and support the bombardment, making our work even more vital. Thank you for everything you are doing to build CAAT and work for peace.

Cover image Wiki Palestine
(Source: WikiCommons)

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Campaign Against Arms Trade works to end the international arms trade. The arms business has a devastating impact on human rights and security and damages economic development. Large-scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.

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WEAPONISING UNIVERSITIES

In recent years, there have been a spate of student protests in opposition to the growing links between UK universities and the arms industry.

These have been targeted at university investments in arms companies, and research partnerships where arms companies are directly funding military-related research on campus.

Universities in Bristol, Nottingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Lancaster, Newcastle, and Glasgow, to name but a few, have seen petitions, demos, occupations of university buildings, and more.

In the context of this growing militarisation of universities, and the resistance to it, CAAT in conjunction with Demilitarise Education (dED_ucation) has published a new report: *Weaponising Universities*.

The report, by Okopi Ajonye of dED_ucation, discusses the background to the development of the “Military Industrial Academic Complex” in the UK, the reasons for it, and the types of research for which arms firms particularly seek out collaborations with academia.

These include “Emerging and Disruptive Technologies,” such as AI, autonomous systems and robotics, hypersonic weapons, and advanced materials, seen as crucial to the future of warfare; and what the report calls “Militarised Environmental Technologies,” such as efforts to reduce aircraft carbon emissions or noise pollution that may have positive civil benefits, but also have important military applications. These are used both to gain military advantage, and to “greenwash” the military and arms industry by creating the illusion that war can be environmentally friendly.

The report then presents three detailed case studies on universities with strong research links to the arms industry, and these technologies:



Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Michel Sauret

- Imperial College London, whose White City Campus has military-related research as a major focus, with numerous arms industry partnerships
- Southampton University, which has collaborations with Rolls-Royce and BAE Systems with regard to technology for aviation and submarines
- Lancaster University, which has a close partnership with BAE Systems, a major regional employer, producing combat aircraft (such as those used to bomb Yemen) in Lancashire, and nuclear submarines at Barrow-in-Furness.

and generally encourage peace education as part of efforts for global disarmament.

Finally, the report presents conclusions and recommendations for governments, universities, and activists. In particular, the need for far greater transparency on university funding from the military and arms industry is highlighted.

The report was launched at a well attended online webinar involving the author, and a panel of academic and student speakers. It is available on CAAT’s website in the Resources section (or in print form on request from the office), and a recording of the webinar is available on CAAT’s YouTube channel.

The report discusses how universities might find alternative sources of funding to the arms industry and promote diversification and conversion of arms industries to productive uses

The report then discusses resistance across the country to the militarisation of universities, and how universities might find alternative sources of funding to the arms industry, promote diversification and conversion of arms industries to productive uses,



The Saudi regime has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with arms company Leonardo to collaborate on arms and aerospace technology. Leonardo's Chairman, Stefano Pontecorvo, described the agreement as "an important opportunity to consolidate defence cooperation and strengthen a joint vision for future combat air operations."

Defence Connect, 06/02/2024

Saudi Arabia has agreed to strengthen its military links to Pakistan and Turkey as part of a trilateral defence agreement. The agreement was negotiated by senior military figures from all three countries. It was the second meeting between the three countries.

New Arab, 10/01/2024

Saudi Arabia and India have taken part in their first bilateral army drill. The exercise, which took place in Northern India, focused on conducting military operations in semi-desert terrain. 45 personnel from each country took part in the drill.

The Defence Post, 31/01/2024

Serbia

The Serbian government is seeking to boost its military cooperation with France, according to the country's President Aleksandar Vucic. His comments came ahead of a state visit to French President Emmanuel Macron and at the same time as the two governments are negotiating the sale of French Rafale fighter jets.

Reuters, 04/04/2024

China

China has agreed to provide "military assistance" to the Maldives as part of a deal to foster "stronger bilateral ties." The move follows increased tensions between Maldives and India following a campaign pledge by President Muizzu to remove Indian military personnel from his country.

Ukraine



Photo: European Parliament | Source: Flickr

French President Emmanuel Macron has urged European governments to switch to "war economy mode" and increase arms transfers to Ukraine. The European Union had pledged to deliver one million shells by early 2024, but reports suggest less than half have been delivered so far.

France 24, 19/02/2024

The Ukraine Security Service says it has uncovered a \$40 million arms corruption scheme. The investigation has seen five people charged for an alleged plot to embezzle funds earmarked to buy mortar shells.

Al Jazeera, 28/01/2024

European Union

Estonia, France and Poland have called for the European Commission and EU member states to commit larger sums to the European arms industry. The countries claim that "Inadequate funding now will only mean higher expenditure at a later date."

Euractiv.com, 05/03/2024

The European Commission has published plans for a €1.5 billion fund to encourage countries to buy jointly from European firms and urge arms companies to develop new technologies.

Reuters, 05/03/2024



Photo: Salim Shadi | Source: Flickr

Japan

The US and Japan are in talks to increase military integration and cooperation in response to what they see as a growing threat from China. The details of the plan are set to be published at a summit between US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida after CAAT News has gone to press.

Al Jazeera, 25/03/2024

Japan is set to ease its arms export laws in order to encourage exports of a fighter jet it is developing alongside the UK and Italy. The aircraft, developed as part of the Global Combat Air Programme, is expected to be delivered by 2035. **FT, 26/03/2024**

Russia

The value of Russian arms exports has fallen by 53% between the five-year periods of 2014-18 and 2019-23, according to analysis by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The fall is thought to be a result of many things, including China's move to self-sufficiency and away from Russian arms as well as global sanctions following the invasion of Ukraine. **Defense News, 11/03/2024**



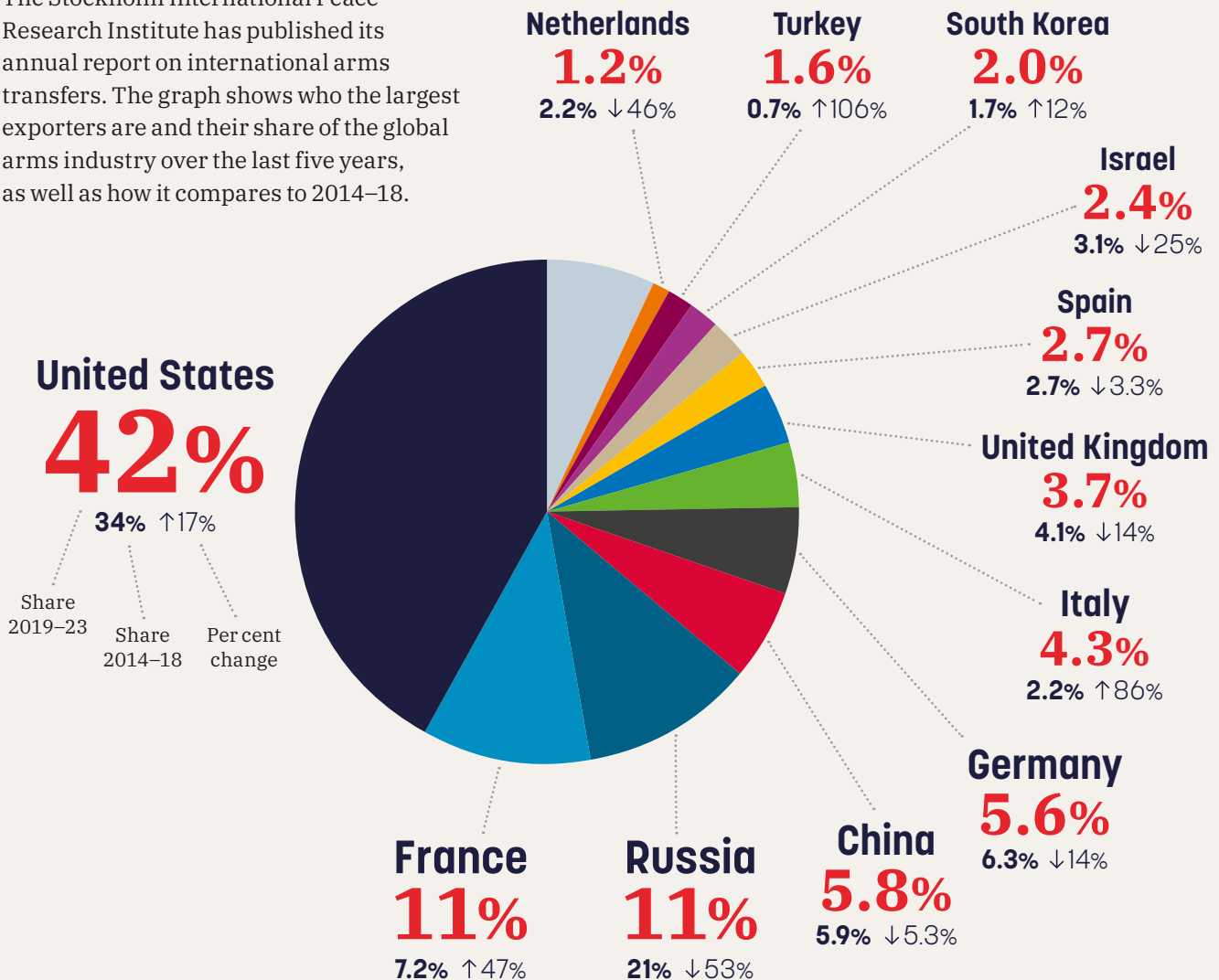
Australia

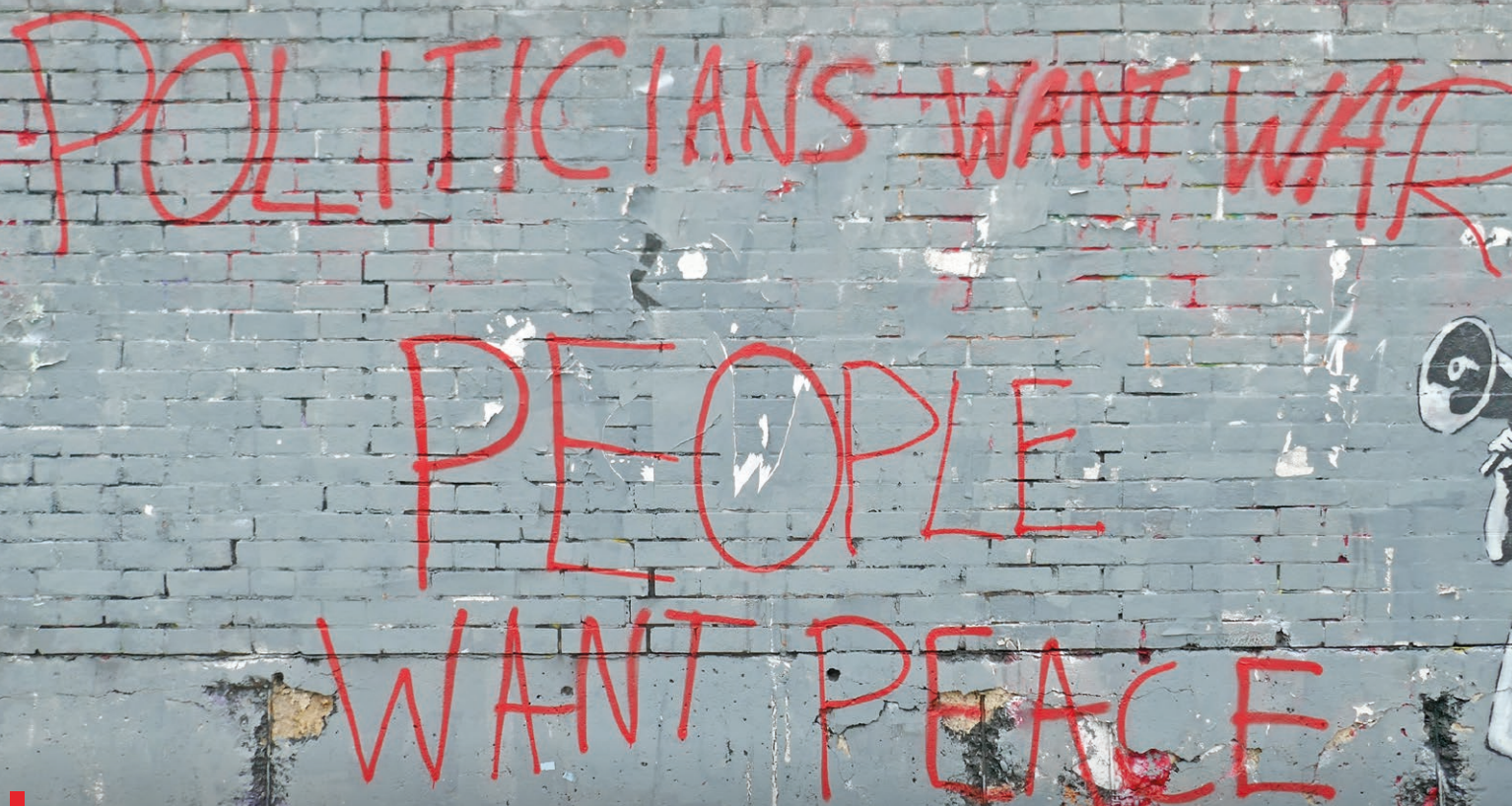
The Australian government has published a support strategy for the arms industry. The plan focuses on domestic priorities and how to expand the arms industry. It includes a particular focus on overhauling military aircraft stocks and manufacturing targeted weapons. **Australian government, 29/02/2024**

Australia has agreed to supply military vehicles to Germany in what is the biggest arms deal in the country's history. The deal, which is worth over \$1 billion, will see 100 Boxer Heavy Weapon Carriers produced in Australia. **Australian government, 21/03/2024**

Global exporters of major arms

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has published its annual report on international arms transfers. The graph shows who the largest exporters are and their share of the global arms industry over the last five years, as well as how it compares to 2014-18.





ARMS TO ISRAEL – PRESSURE MOUNTS ON LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY FRONTS

As Israel continues its genocidal war in Gaza, both the Israeli government and those who are supplying arms to Israel, such as the US and the UK, have come under increasing pressure worldwide, legally and in parliament.

At the time of writing, over 34,000 Palestinians have been killed, and, as northern Gaza has reached famine conditions, there have been numerous deaths from starvation and dehydration due to Israel's blockade of aid.

In February, in a historic case brought against Israel by South Africa, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague – the UN's highest court – found that there was a plausible case that Israel was engaged in genocide in Gaza, and agreed to hear the substantive case.

While this may take years, the ICJ also imposed interim measures on Israel to prevent genocide, including ceasing genocidal acts including the killing of

Palestinians and destruction of vital infrastructure, and ensuring the flow of humanitarian aid. Israel has essentially ignored this ruling, and in March, the Court imposed additional measures to ensure the

Under the Genocide Convention, all states have a duty to prevent and punish genocide, so the ICJ ruling raises serious questions for countries supplying arms to Israel

immediate and unhindered flow of aid, noting that famine was already setting in in north Gaza. Again, there is no sign that Israel is paying any attention to the ruling.

Under the Genocide Convention, all states have a duty to prevent

and punish genocide, so the ICJ ruling raises serious questions for countries supplying arms to Israel, as they risk being complicit in genocide – a specific crime under the convention – if they continue to do so.

Following the ruling, a group of UN Special Rapporteurs (independent experts given a specific mandate by the UN General Assembly to report on specific issues) and UN Panels of Experts wrote an open letter calling on states to stop sending arms to Israel, or risk being held liable for such complicity in genocide.

More recently in April, a group of over 600 lawyers, judges, and academic legal experts, including



Photo: Duncan Cunningham | Source: Flickr

3 former UK Supreme Court judges, wrote a letter to the UK government warning that continued arms sales to Israel were against international law and must stop.

Meanwhile, the efforts by Palestinian human rights organisation Al Haq, along with the Global Legal Action Network (GLAN) to challenge the Government's approval of arms sales to Israel in the UK courts continues.

While an application for Judicial Review was initially declined by the High Court, they have now been granted an oral hearing to try to persuade the judge to allow the case to proceed to a full hearing. (A similar thing happened with CAAT's first Judicial Review on arms to Saudi – permission to bring the case was initially declined “on the papers,” but then at an oral hearing, the High Court agreed to hear the case.)

Political pressure

Pressure has also been mounting on the Government in Parliament, especially since the targeted killing by Israel of 7 aid workers, including 3 Britons, in Gaza on 1 April. In February an attempt by the SNP to bring an Opposition Day motion calling for an immediate ceasefire, which was expected to attract support from a large number of Labour MPs in defiance of their leadership, was thwarted when the Speaker, Lindsay Hoyle, broke Parliamentary convention to allow a Labour motion, which was much weaker, to be debated instead.

Outrageously, the Speaker and the Government attempted to blame his move on supposed threats to MPs by pro-Palestine activists, which the Government has since used to seek to expand the definition of “extremism”.

In March, a group of 107 MPs and 27 Peers from all parties signed an open letter to the Government calling for an end to UK arms sales to Israel.

There have been signs of the Government responding to this pressure, and expressing increasing discontent with Israel's policies. In March, Foreign Minister David Cameron wrote to the Chair of the House of Commons Foreign Relations Committee, Alicia Kearns MP (Con), stating that Israel was failing to allow sufficient aid into Gaza, and was blocking aid, including from the UK, on arbitrary grounds, turning away entire lorries due to the presence of supposedly “dual use” items such as a pair of medical scissors. While not accusing Israel of violating international law, this was as close as the Government has come to doing so.

Alicia Kearns, who has used her position to question the Government quite robustly on their position on Israel and Gaza, subsequently revealed that she believed that the Government had in fact received legal advice that

Israel was violating international law in Gaza, but was keeping this advice secret. Acknowledging this would effectively require the Government to halt arms sales. The Government has not commented on her claim.

The murder of the seven aid workers by Israel, including three UK citizens, all military veterans, one with Special Forces, seems to have turned opinion

In March, a group of 107 MPs and 27 Peers from all parties signed an open letter to the Government calling for an end to UK arms sales to Israel. There have been signs of the Government responding to this pressure

even among some Conservatives against Israel, with several MPs arguing for a halt to arms sales. The Liberal Democrat leader, Ed Davey, has also called for this for the first time. Several retired generals and a former UK National Security Advisor have also joined the call. Shamefully, however, the opposition Labour Party leadership has not, with a Shadow Minister stating that an embargo is not Labour policy.

This pressure will continue between the writing of this article and the magazine arriving on your doorstep, but we hope that it will, in the near future, lead to a suspension of arms licences.

However, even if it does, it comes far, far too late for tens of thousands of Palestinians killed and hundreds of thousands facing starvation. It is striking that it seem to have taken the killing of seven westerners to even put such a move on the table, an indictment of the white supremacist worldview behind most politicians' positions and media reporting on the genocide.

Still, if the UK does stop supplying arms, including crucial components for Israel's F-35s, it may go some way towards hastening the end of this monstrous war.



TWICKENHAM ARMS FAIR MUST BE KICKED INTO TOUCH

Twickenham has seen not one but two arms fairs so far in 2024

International Armoured Vehicles, 2024 edition arrived at the Rugby Stadium in January, bringing together a litany of war profiteers. With participants including Europe's biggest arms company, BAE Systems, as well as Italian arms giant, Leonardo, and Israeli drone maker Elbit Systems, it was a big event.

One thing that all these companies have in common is that they have profited from arming Israel and have helped to enable the genocide being inflicted on the people of Gaza. This arms fair was also notable for the rather sinister comments made by army chief, Gen Sir Patrick Sanders about a "citizen army," which sparked worries about conscription.

If that wasn't bad enough, February saw the further unwanted arrival of the Military Helicopters show, also hosted at the HQ of England's Rugby

Union. It was attended by Boeing and Lockheed Martin / Sikorsky, who have both been massively complicit in the devastation in Gaza with their F-15, F-16 and F-35 warplanes respectively. Israeli missile maker Rafael were also present and looking for a profit.

They weren't unopposed. Far from it.

Hundreds of campaigners said no to these arms fairs in their community, standing in solidarity with the people of Gaza

Richmond and Kingston PSC (R&K PSC), supported by Kingston Peace Council and CAAT organised two very large and boisterous protests at the Rugby Stadium. Hundreds of campaigners said no to these arms fairs in their community, standing in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

Those arriving to take part in these carnivals of violence were greeted with signs condemning "Merchants of Death," and "Blood on your hands! Supplying weapons = Using Weapons."

Speaking outside the stadium during the first arms fair, Ayesha from R&KPSC said, "Shame on you English Rugby! We have the largest rugby stadium in the world, that we should be proud of, that hosts countries from all over the world to come and play sport."

But, she added, "Sport should not mix with arms dealers! It should not mix with repressive regimes and governments. We do not want them on our doorstep!"

We agree. It is high time that arms fairs in Twickenham finally come to an end, and English Rugby can go back to doing what it does best: Losing to the All Blacks. Thrilling onlookers with sporting excellence.

CAMPAIGNERS BLOCKADE BRISTOL ARMS FAIR FOR TWO DAYS OVER ITS COMPLICITY IN ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE

On 5th and 6th March, the Future Indirect Fires and Joint Military Training & Simulation Stream conferences took place at the Ashton Gate stadium in Bristol.

These events brought together senior military personnel and arms industry reps from across the world. Among the arms companies attending the conference were BAE Systems and Israeli arms giant Elbit Systems, which plays a central role in arming the occupation and battle testing its weapons and technologies on Palestinians.

CAAT supporters, alongside Bristol PSC and Bristol STWC and other local groups, spent two days blockading the fair, shutting down vehicle access, and letting the arms dealers know that they were not going to be meeting unopposed.

The protest aimed “to make it clear that arms manufacturers are not welcome in our city and that we stand against Elbit and BAE and with Palestinian people.” CAAT also received reports that one

person managed to infiltrate the arms fair, setting off several loud alarms in inaccessible places.

Ashton Gate is also the home of Bristol City FC, and club supporters were not happy that an arms fair was using its grounds.

One Stream in Bristol, a Bristol City supporter podcast, put out a strongly worded statement saying the event “does not represent the wider values of the Bristol community.” It continued that it aimed “to show that organisations who profit from war and the manufacture of lethal weapons have no place in our community stadium.”

Our Government may refuse to act to curb arms sales, but all over the country people are showing on a daily basis that we can and we will take action against this abhorrent trade and its deadly consequences.



FUTURE
INDIRECT FIRES
CONFERENCE

That is why, whenever and wherever arms dealers are meeting, protesters are there to greet them. Our Government and the UK arms industry may be complicit in the horrific war crimes Israel is committing in Gaza, its citizens are not. People are not willing to stand by while arms dealers profit from genocide.

Congratulations to all the people in Bristol who not only pulled together this successful protest, but who regularly take action at companies based there such as Elbit Systems. We hope that Ashton Gate learns from the experience and refuses to host these merchants of death in the future.





ELECTIONS IN TURKEY

CAAT's Media Coordinator spent a week in Bakur (the majority Kurdish area of Turkey) monitoring the local elections with the progressive Kurdish DEM Parti. The Turkish government is a major buyer of UK arms.

“Look at these names,” says a woman pointing at a list of voters in a school in Beytüşşebap, a small town outside Sirnack in South East Turkey. “None of them live here. They are soldiers, transported into vote.”

The list she shows me is indeed littered with non-residents. One or two you might expect, but not page after page in a mountain town with just 6,000 residents.

Voting in the Turkish local elections took place in multiple classrooms in three schools in Beytüşşebap. In every school, in every classroom, the issue was the same. And it was an issue replicated across the region.

Reports piled in from other election observers of soldiers queuing to vote; videos on social media showed locals in small towns challenging those arriving to

While lots of people rightly celebrated Erdogan's massive defeat on Sunday 31st March, this result does not mean that Turkey has become a free and functioning democracy

vote, asking “Who are you? Where are you from?” The next day photos showed packed regional airports full of soldiers going home.

Repression greeted every voter. Militarised police in armoured

personnel carriers waited outside each polling station we visited. At least a dozen armed police officers were in the playgrounds outside the schools. “It is psychological pressure,” one man tells me, saying it does impact people’s willingness to vote.

The combination of fraud and repression worked. In Beytüşşebap and in Sirnack city itself, the DEM Parti lost by narrow margins. “It was a stolen election,” one person says. In the evening, the repression had already started. In Sirnack, police surrounded the party office and violently arrested the party’s co-chair, alongside several youths.

The following day dozens of

UK arms sales to Turkey since 2014 have been worth at least £2.1 billion, including:



ML10 licences for aircraft, helicopters, drones

£290m



ML4 licences for grenades, bombs, missiles, countermeasures

£119m



ML9 licences for warships

£21m

police still stood outside the office. They filmed us while we did a media interview with a Kurdish news channel and demanded the passports of other election observers. The day after, Bakur erupted in protests after Erdogan's AKP party tried to steal the election in Van despite losing the vote. Eventually, he backed down and conceded defeat.

But even in the areas where Kurdish candidates won, it's unclear how long they will keep control locally. Following the last local elections, it was only a matter of weeks before Erdogan seized control and replaced all the democratically elected mayors with kayyims (trustees). No-one I spoke to expected it to be any different this time.

While lots of people rightly celebrated Erdogan's massive defeat on Sunday 31st March, this result does not mean that Turkey has become a free and functioning democracy. Far from it. Turkey is not a democracy if you're Kurdish. More repression is expected as a wounded Erdogan is likely to inflict his revenge in Bakur.

For us as CAAT supporters, we need to take action against arms sales. We need to tell the story of what's happening to Kurdish communities in Bakur. We need to make sure the voices of the people I spoke to in small towns where the media never goes are heard.

We need to stand in solidarity with Kurdish people and we need to end the UK government's complicity in the repression, and halt arms sales to Turkey.

THE WAR LOBBY

One reason that arms are able to flow from the UK to human rights abusing regimes like the one in Turkey is because of the huge levels of political and institutional support given to arms companies by Downing Street.

There is a whole Government department, UK Defence & Security Exports, that uses public money to hire civil servants for the sole purpose of helping the arms and security industries to promote and sell their products around the world.

There are also no end of opportunities for arms companies that want to gain access to and influence the Government:

- Thousands of hours of meetings that take place every year,
- The revolving door between companies, military and government,

- The industry bodies within government itself
- All of this has contributed to an unbending and unquestioning governmental support for arms exports.

The arms industry spends a lot of money lobbying the Government, with arms trade bodies like the Aerospace, Defence & Security Group holding lavish dinners for politicians and industry figureheads.

If we are to finally put a halt to the arms trade it means tackling the huge influence that it enjoys in the corridors of power.



Photo: James Stringer | Source: Flickr



**ML3 licences
for ammunition**

£16m

LOCAL ANTI-ARMS TRADE ACTION

Across the UK, campaigners have been taking action to call for an end to arms sales to Israel and to stand in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

Workers for a Free Palestine have blockaded Leonardo in Edinburgh and GE Aviation in Cheltenham following similar pickets last year that were supported by local CAAT groups. In addition, CAAT supporters in Southampton took action and said no to Leonardo in their city the same day.

Blackburn4Palestine has been regularly picketing the BAE Systems factory at Samlesbury, which makes the aft fuselage for the F-35. Geordies Against Genocide have picketed the arms company Rafael, which has a factory on the Scotswood Rd in Newcastle, with a big march planned in April.

Arms companies are being held accountable by ordinary people all across the country

In addition, there have been protests at Barclays Bank branches UK-wide (see opposite), and at arms fairs (see p8–9) in Twickenham, Bristol and Farnborough.

Meanwhile, London CAAT has been focusing on arms company bosses. The ADS arms dealer dinner in January in a swanky Park Lane hotel saw the biggest-ever protests. Arms dealers who had paid £250 per head for a slap-up meal, and to listen to

speaker Alistair Campbell were roundly scolded by protesters, a number of whom took direct action to block the entrance.

One of those caught up in the protests was arms industry lobbyist Lord Walney. Instead of reconsidering his support for a murderous industry fueling death and disaster around the world, his response was to call for yet another “crackdown” on protesters.

London CAAT also visited arms company HQs in London in April

including Boeing, L3 Harris and BAE Systems, with dozens of campaigners as part of its latest Merchants of Death tour, highlighting to passers-by the links these posh London offices have to the mayhem in Gaza.

CAAT’s local groups and activists are playing a key role in exposing the arms trade in their communities. It’s very clear that arms companies are being held accountable by ordinary people all across the country.



Say no to the genocide profiteers on your doorstep!

CAAT has published an interactive map of all UK companies manufacturing components for Israel’s F-35 aircraft.

15% of every F-35 that Israel is using to bombard Gaza is made by British industry. CAAT estimates the value of the components UK industry supplies for Israeli F-35s

to have been at least £368 million since 2016.

The components are shipped on an unlimited “open” licence. CAAT’s data team have plotted key locations for the companies featured on the licence onto the new map. Where researchers have discovered information about how

the products might be used, that information is also included on the map.

You can find it at caat.org.uk/data/countries/israel/mapped-all-the-uk-companies-manufacturing-components-for-israels-f35-combat-aircraft/

CAAT SCOTLAND

Despite loud statements of solidarity with Gaza and bold finger-pointing at Westminster to Stop Arming Israel, February saw the Scottish Parliament playing host to some of the biggest names in death and destruction.

The ADS Group, which is a trade body for arms companies, hosted an intimate reception in Holyrood. With a steering group full of arms company reps from BAE Systems, Raytheon and Leonardo, it was a chance for the industry to cosy up to parliamentarians while their fighter jets and smart bombs target thousands of Palestinians.

The reception was sponsored by French arms company Thales,

alongside Scottish Labour MSP Paul Sweeney. After media outlets reported Sweeney's involvement he quickly dropped his support, only to be replaced as sponsor by Tory MSP Jackson Carlaw.

The reception was a chance for the industry to cosy up to parliamentarians while their fighter jets and smart bombs target thousands of Palestinians

Edinburgh CAAT, the Gaza Genocide Emergency Committee, and other groups gathered nearly 100 activists from across Scotland, complete with grim reaper costumes and an endless list of names of those who have suffered and died while the arms companies inside line their pockets with conflict-fuelled profit margins.

Members of Edinburgh CAAT had written to MSPs and the Presiding Officer demanding the cancellation of the reception, with calls for an immediate end to funding streams for arms companies through Scottish Enterprise.

You can take action too by writing to First Minister Humza Yousaf on our website: caat.org.uk/scottishfunding

Edinburgh CAAT meets bi-monthly and are organising events and actions through the summer. If you would like to join their next meeting and get involved, please get in touch with scotland@caat.org.uk



Barclay's – stop banking on genocide!

Campaigners have continued to put pressure on Barclays Bank to stop profiting from bloodshed.

The High Street bank holds massive investments in arms companies complicit in the attacks on Gaza, including millions of pounds in Elbit Systems, Israel's largest arms company. It also has hundreds of millions of pounds invested in BAE Systems which makes the rear fuselage of the F-35 warplane, being used by Israel in the bombing.

All told, according to War on Want, Barclays has over £4 billion pounds in loans and

other financial services in these and other arms companies that supply Israel: money being used by arms companies to fund their deadly activities.

With colleagues from Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the charity War on Want, CAAT supporters have been outside (and inside!) Barclays branches telling the bank to stop. They have also been letting Barclays customers know of the harm their bank accounts are causing. Hundreds of Palestine supporters have stopped banking with Barclays.

A new joint report is in the works that will expose just how much

cash Barclays has invested in the arms trade. The figures are eye-popping. Keep an eye out for it.

Barclays investments are killing Palestinians. It is time they stopped bankrolling genocide and apartheid.



DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

Not content with draconian anti-protest laws introduced in the Police, Crime and Sentencing Act and the recent Public Order Act, the Government wants even more powers to stop us protesting.



Photo: Eilay/Cuboctahedron | Source: Flickr

Scared by the hundreds of thousands of us taking to the streets to protest the genocide Israel is committing in Gaza, the Government labelled peace protests as “hate marches” and threatened more laws, including more restrictions on when masks can be worn and an offence of climbing on war memorials.

It is this government that is a threat to our democracy through threatening our right to protest; the very thing that enables a democracy to flourish

Meanwhile, it has been ramping up its rhetoric on extremism, and is seeking yet more powers to prevent protests outside MPs offices and council buildings. In classic double speak, it claims this is necessary to “protect democracy.” Nothing could be further from the truth. It is this government that is a threat to our democracy by threatening our right to protest; the very thing that enables a democracy to flourish.

It is likely that the threat of these

new powers is nothing but talk, sounding tough for the far-right base of the Conservative Party. Given the proximity to the general election, and the fact that so little legislation is actually making its way through Parliament, it’s unlikely these powers will reach the statute books before an election. However we must not be complacent.

Even if they are not introduced, there are no signs that a Starmer government will be any more favourable towards protesters, and it’s just as likely that Labour will bring in its own draconian anti-protest powers.

It’s vital we all defend dissent, and show solidarity with people targeted by repressive policing. Check out police monitoring group Netpol’s resources to make sure you know how to look after yourselves and each other. And make sure you know your rights if you’re going on a demo. Protest rights group, Green and Black Cross hold regular Know Your Rights trainings online. Get along to one and get informed!

The London School of Economics and CAAT’s 50th anniversary

A Say in the End of the World: Solidarity and Nuclear Defence in the Cold War opened at the LSE Library on 4th March and runs until 15th September.

In our 50th anniversary year, we are proud to have been invited to be part of this interesting and important exhibition curated by PhD student Gareth Bryant.

As we have mentioned in previous issues, our vast archives now live at the London Schools of Economics (LSE) Library where our operations manager, Jon, and our Supporter Development Manager, Charles, spent a fascinating few hours with the two librarians in charge of cataloguing it.

They went through the walls of brown boxes and chose representative exhibits for our display. We were pleased that the hammer, used to damage an aircraft that could have been used in East Timor, is the highlighted image on the masthead of the exhibition webpage.

LSE – CAAT lecture

Dr Sam Perlo-Freeman, our research coordinator, has been invited to give a lecture at the LSE in late June, which will look at CAAT’s 50 years of opposing the arms trade – what has changed and what has stayed the same.

Please keep an eye on the CAAT website, our emails and social media posts for details of the date and other events during this year.

Thank you

As always, we are truly grateful to you all for your support. This is yet another busy year for us and the help we get from volunteers and supporters really underpins the work we do from the office. Our media posts – with hard facts, backed up by valuable statistics from our research – have been picked up more than ever this year.

Many of you have responded to our call for letters to be written to your MPs and the Government has rightly been put under a great deal of pressure.

Please help us continue to do this essential work by making a donation. You can do this by going to the Donate page on our website, or completing the form at the end of this issue.

If you would like to be kept updated about our plans, please let us know your email address if we don't have it by dropping a line to Charles at supporters@caat.org.uk

Ploughshares

Thank you to CAAT supporter Richard Stewart (Ipswich Quakers) who sent us this poem

Always the guns he used
Were those that had killed
Rendered safe, they were flattened
With a strong force for once positive
And made into sturdy shovels,
Gleaming spades, with which people
In the Third World planted trees,
Dug in other fruitful crops
And made earth banks to protect
Their harvest from sudden floods.

Then he turned to music, that
Universal chord of communication,
Fashioned fine and varied
Instruments but this time
Seeking not to disguise their origin
But retaining intrinsic parts
Of these once deadly weapons
So that destruction and creative
Energy fused into a vibrant
Spiritual performance.

Now he is sending them out
To every president, prime minister,
Dictator, chief of staff, head of
Defence, arms merchant and religious
Leader, all over the world.
From just one discarded pistol
His sights have now become universal.

THEY SAID IT

“In a year where we saw rising instability across Europe, the Middle East and other parts of the world, it really brings into focus the vital role we play in protecting national security.”

BAE Systems CEO Charles Woodburn highlights the role of “rising instability” and BAE securing record profits. *Middle East Eye, 21/02/2024*

“Sell Israel whatever it wants. Change the law to ban British citizens from travelling to active war zones. The prospect of the UK changing its support stance for Israel just because some aid workers got killed is obscene.”

Daily Telegraph reader responds to calls for end to arms exports to Israel following killing of seven aid workers. *Daily Telegraph, 04/04/2024*

“We don't discuss weapons.”

Elbit Systems vice president of business development, Ziv Avni, turns down comment requests from Reuters at arms fair. *Reuters, 23/02/2024*



Photo: Choo Yui Shing | Source: Flickr

DONATE TODAY!

You can donate to CAAT by either visiting our website at caat.org.uk, or completing the form below (in block capitals) and returning it to: Freepost RUEA-ERLT-XLZC, CAAT, 7 Wellesley Rd, Tharston, Norwich NR15 2PD

Donations direct to CAAT are the most useful for the campaign, but if you send a Charities Aid Foundation cheque please make it payable to TREAT (Trust for Research and Education on Arms Trade) making clear that you wish for your donation to support CAAT's research programme. Unlike CAAT, TREAT is a registered charity (No.328694).

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Regular donation



A direct debit is the most convenient and cost effective way to support CAAT.

A donation of £10 a month makes a real difference and helps us plan our future work.

Instruction to your Bank/Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

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