

CAAT NEWS

The quarterly magazine for Campaign Against Arms Trade

Issue 270
Autumn 2024



NEW GOVERNMENT, SAME PROBLEM?

PLUS

Political influence of the arms trade **P7**

Inside the arms trade **P8-9**

UK arms to Israel **P13**



**CAMPAIGN
AGAINST
ARMS
TRADE**

As this CAAT News goes to press we are approaching the one year anniversary of the bombing of Gaza. In that time, over 40,000 Palestinians have been killed, but the UK has continued to arm and support the disastrous assault.

We now have a new Prime Minister, but what impact will that make? What will Labour do differently when it comes to arms sales? We've laid out some initial thoughts on P10.

Also included in this issue are features on the resistance to the Farnborough arms fair and a fascinating story of a paper mill and its links to global arms sales.

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Printed by Castle Fulfilment on 100% recycled paper using only post-consumer waste.

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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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GOVERNMENT STALLING DECISION ON ARMS TO ISRAEL



While the previous Tory government had no qualms about allowing arms sales to Israel to continue unabated, the new Labour government faces a huge amount of internal pressure from MPs and voters furious that the UK is continuing to support an ongoing genocide.

The recent election saw Labour losing hundreds of thousands of votes and several seats to pro-Palestinian candidates.

At the same time, the new Government remains strongly supportive of Israel, and even more so of the UK arms industry, and is reluctant to harm relations with the US, Israel's biggest arms supplier. You can see more about this dynamic on P10.

At the end of July, after several weeks of dithering and rumours they were about to announce a partial arms embargo, they kicked the can down the road, ordering a review that is likely to take weeks or months.

Unlike the last government, they no longer seem to be pretending that Israel is complying with international law. Instead they seem to be trying to distinguish between “offensive” and “defensive” weapons (an extremely dubious distinction), and are investigating whether specific attacks can be linked to specific weapons systems containing UK components.

This is a likely impossible task in

most cases, and is utterly unnecessary. Israel is using all its warplanes to bomb Gaza, including the F-35 that is made 15% in the UK, and the F-16 that also contains important UK components. It is absurd to try to claim that a risk of war crimes only exists if you can prove which aircraft dropped which bomb on which civilian target.

Stopping other arms supplies while continuing to sell F-35 components would be like going vegetarian except for bacon

But this spurious exercise may well be an attempt to find some excuse to allow the continued supply of UK components, including spare parts, for Israel's F-35s, almost certainly the most important UK arms supplies to Israel.

Stopping other arms supplies while continuing to sell F-35 components would be like going vegetarian except for bacon. But stopping them would anger the US, and might jeopardise the UK's

place in the F-35 programme. The US might delay deliveries of new aircraft to the UK, and take away some of the billions worth of business that the UK arms industry makes from the F-35.

Meanwhile, CAAT and other groups are not letting up the pressure on the Government. We want to make clear that any decision other than a complete arms embargo will lead to absolute fury among the millions in this country who stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine.

The pressure will also continue through the courts. Palestinian human rights group Al Haq's Judicial Review against UK arms sales to Israel will be heard in the High Court in October. Working with the claimants and their lawyers, CAAT has supplied a detailed Witness Statement providing all the information we have to date on UK arms to Israel. You can find some of this information on P13.

The Government can choose to do the right thing – or we'll see them in court.

ARMS TRADE SHORTS

Germany



With more than €7.5 billion worth of arms licensed in the first six months of 2024, this is likely to be a record year for the German arms industry. Ukraine accounts for over half of the value of exports. Other major buyers include India, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.
Defense News, 03 July 2024

Raytheon has been awarded a \$478 million contract by the NATO Support and Procurement Agency to supply missiles to Germany. The contract is intended to replenish German missile stocks following military donations to Ukraine.
UK Defence Journal, 12 August 2024

Turkey

The Turkish government has reportedly imposed a ban on all arms exports to India as part of its diplomatic moves towards Pakistan. The announcement is said to have been made in a closed session of parliament.
Nordic Monitor, 18 July 2024

Turkey has said it will suspend all trade with Israel in opposition to the ongoing bombardment of Gaza. The ban extends beyond weapons to include all major economic areas. The Turkish government has said the measures will be in place until Israel allows an “uninterrupted and sufficient flow” of aid into Gaza.
BBC News Online, 03 May 2024

Saudi Arabian Military Industries, the Saudi state-owned arms producer, has signed three Memorandums of Understanding with Turkish companies relating to collaboration on military technology, including unmanned aerial vehicles.
Iran International, 07 April 2024

The value of Turkish arms and aerospace sales has increased by over 20% in the first half of 2024 compared to this time last year, according to government statistics. The Turkish government claims that its equipment is used in 185 countries around the world.
Daily Sabah, 04 July 2024

Russia

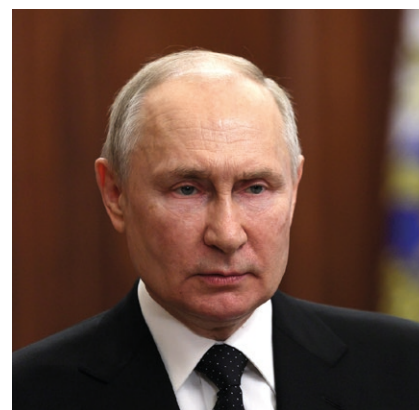
The US has threatened sanctions against China unless it curbs the sale of military technology to Russia. It is believed that sanctions are likely to target China’s financial institutions.

US officials have claimed that 70% of Russian machine tool imports in the final quarter of 2023 were from China and were “likely used” to produce ballistic missiles.

FT, 20 April 2024

North Korea has denied that it is providing weapons for Russia’s war in Ukraine. The defence, which was issued by Kim Yo-jong, the influential sister of North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un, follows new US sanctions on Russian companies and individuals believed to be connected to the transfer of arms from North Korea.

The Independent, 17 May 2024



New figures from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute show that France has overtaken Russia as the world’s second largest arms exporter, behind the US. The figures show that over the course of 2019-2023, France increased its market share from 7.2% to 11.4%, with Russia falling from 21% to 11% largely as a result of the invasion of Ukraine.
Politico, 11 March 2024

India

The value of India's arms exports in Q1 2024 has increased by 78% compared to 2023, making it a record quarter for the industry. This follows a record year of exports for 2023-24.

Economic Times, 12 August 2024

Trade

The UK, US and Australia have signed a new agreement that will remove exports controls and restrictions on technology sharing, which they claim will cover up to £500 million in UK military exports every year while facilitating billions of dollars in trade across the three nations.

UK Defence Journal, 16 August 2024

Saudi Arabia

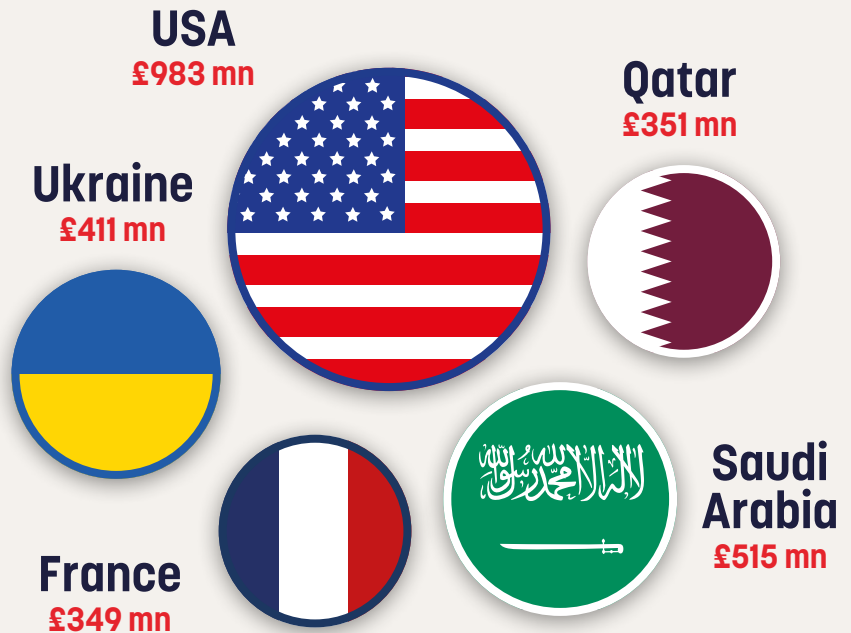
The US has announced that it will resume arms exports to Saudi Arabia, this follows temporary restrictions on some weapon types that were introduced by the Biden administration due to the conduct of the Saudi-led bombing of Yemen.

The Guardian, 12 August 2024



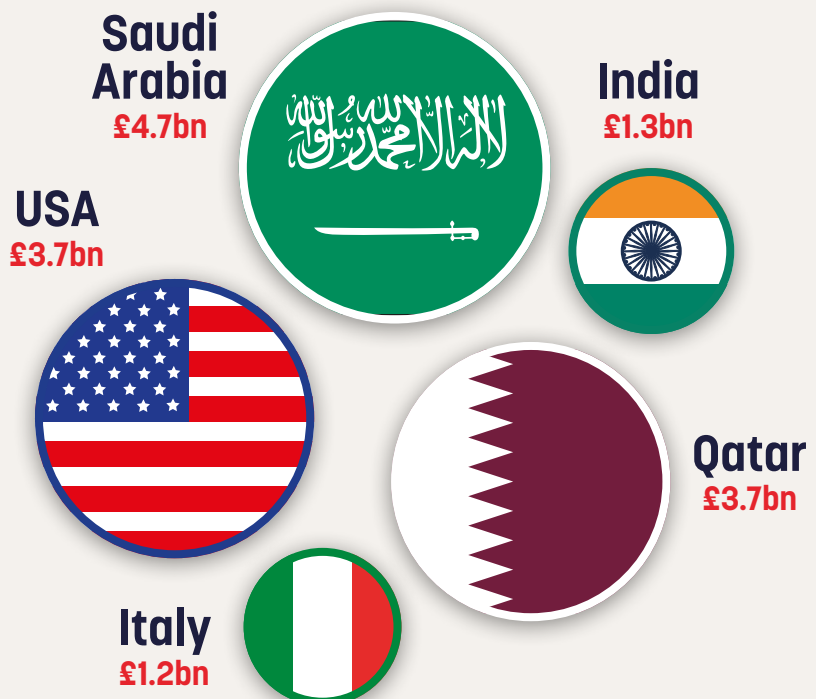
UK arms sales in 2023

In 2023 the UK licensed £5 billion worth of arms using standard arms export licences. The five largest buyers were:



This was down from a record £8.5 billion in 2022, but the trend is still up, with the 5-year total of £27.3 billion from 2019-2023 the highest recorded, even accounting for inflation.

Taking a longer view, from 2019-23, the biggest recipients were:



These figures do not include “open licences” which allow an unlimited transfer of arms and which do not require the total value to be published.

If you want to see the latest data on UK arms exports, visit caat.org.uk/resources

CAMPAIGNERS SAY, "NO TO THE HORROR SHOW" IN FARNBOROUGH

The Farnborough International Airshow takes place every two years, and was back in the Hampshire town this July.

Despite its reputation as a family day out, Farnborough is anything but. It is an arms fair attended by arms company reps and military buyers who come from all over the world.

It all takes place on a huge airbase with live demonstrations and aircraft going overhead throughout the day. It's a big production, with expensive equipment everywhere and arms company branded chalets where arms dealers and their clients can enjoy private meetings.

All of this is supported by the UK government, with UK civil servants playing a key role, including inviting international attendees and introducing potential buyers to sellers.

Around two thirds of the value of UK arms exports comes from aviation: warplanes, helicopters, missiles, and bombs. We have seen the damage they can do, with UK-made aircraft playing a central role in the Saudi-led bombardment of Yemen, which created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

The air show – or “horror show” as it is called by campaigners – earns its money by hosting all of the biggest arms companies, including many complicit in the ongoing Israeli genocide in Palestine.

Those arriving were greeted by a noisy protest in solidarity with all those affected by the arms trade

Lockheed Martin, whose F35 and F16 warplanes have done so much damage in Gaza, sponsored the entry footbridge. Missile maker RTX Raytheon advertised heavily in the event magazine that was handed out to delegates. And the UK's biggest arms company, BAE Systems, took up an entire hall to promote and display its deadly wares. They were joined by Israeli arms companies Elbit Systems and Rafael among others.

Those arriving were greeted by a noisy protest in solidarity with all those affected by the arms trade,

but especially with Palestinians in Gaza.

Campaigners from Greater Rushmoor Action for Peace, CAAT and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign were joined by Quakers, activists from the Peace Pledge Union, singers from the Raised Voices choir, and others including local residents who saw the protest on their doorstep and wanted to join in!

In addition to the protest there was a day-long vigil and a Quaker meeting for worship. Peace campaigners spoke to arms industry delegates as they arrived and left, handing out information to passers-by and attendees.

From time to time the noise of warplanes being flown overhead reminded us of how terrifying it must be to be the target of such weapons. But the powerful songs from Raised Voices and the demands from campaigners that the show stop being complicit in genocide left the more enduring memory.



GOVERNMENT AND ARMS INDUSTRY JOINED AT THE HIP

Anti-arms trade campaigners often talk about the “revolving door” between government and industry – ministers, MPs, senior civil servants, generals and admirals moving from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) into the arms trade, as also happens with other industries.

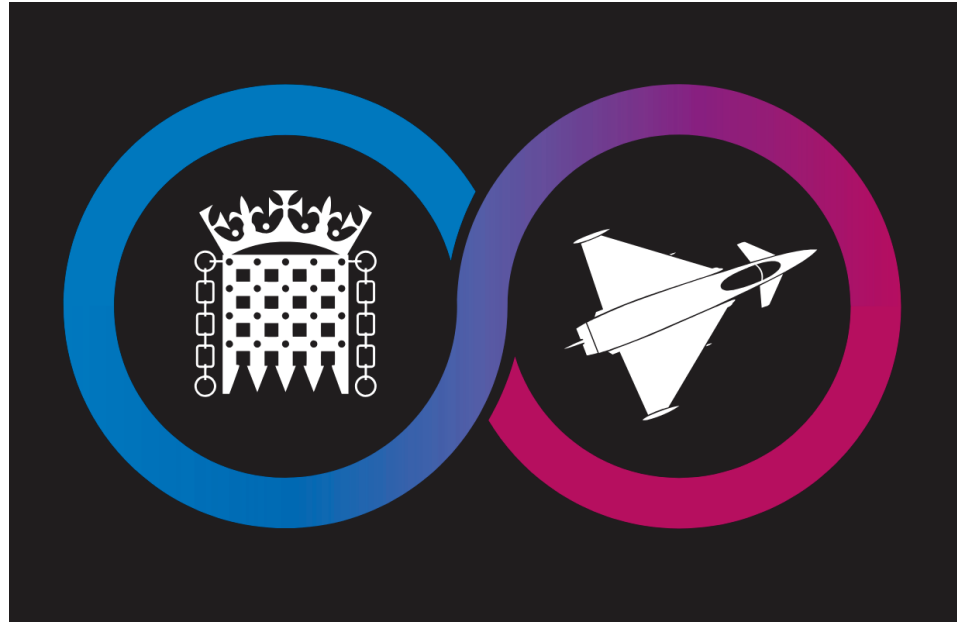
Not only does this create a risk that these ex-officials will use their inside knowledge and contacts to benefit their new employers, it also reinforces a cozy relationship between government and industry, an incentive for current ministers and officials to act in the interests of potential future employers, and a sense of “groupthink”.

A report to be published by CAAT and World Peace Foundation later in September goes further, arguing that the arms industry has become so deeply institutionally embedded in government that the boundary between the two has been virtually erased.

What we see now is not so much a revolving door, as an “open-plan office”, where cases such as former Cabinet Secretary and National Security Advisor Mark Sedwill joining the board of BAE is not seen as a scandal, rather an entirely natural transition from one branch of the national security state to another.

Between 2010 and 2021, the revolving door saw over 40% of top military and civilian personnel who left the MOD taking a position in the arms and security industries

This is just one prominent recent example of the revolving door that, between 2010 and 2021, saw over 40% of top military and civilian personnel leaving the MOD taking a position in the arms and security industries. From Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD department responsible for arms procurement, a clear



majority joined the industry that supplies these arms.

The big difference, of course, is that BAE Systems is a privately-owned company whose primary, indeed only, loyalty is to its shareholders, and that is not subject to any democratic accountability, even nominally. But BAE in particular has gained a position at the heart of government, with an unparalleled level of access. Data from Transparency International shows that from 2012–23, BAE had more meetings with ministers, and more with Prime Ministers, than any other private company.

But it's not as if the arms industry has done this by subterfuge; on the contrary, successive governments have actively encouraged a closer relationship with the arms industry.

Partly as a result, the UK's top arms companies get a guaranteed flow of contracts, with companies like BAE, Rolls Royce, and Leonardo receiving about 90%

of their MOD revenue through non-competitive contracts. The companies continue to profit

From 2012–23, BAE had more meetings with ministers, and more with Prime Ministers, than any other private company

despite major arms programmes routinely going over budget and schedule. Meanwhile, they enjoy heavy government support in selling arms, and an export control regime that bends over backwards to allow exports to countries like Saudi Arabia and Israel, in spite of the obvious harm they cause. It is a system that works for no-one but the arms companies and their shareholders.

From Revolving Door to Open-plan Office: the Ever Closer Union Between the UK Government and the Arms Industry will be published on 18 September with a hybrid launch event. See [caat.org.uk](https://www.caat.org.uk) for details.

EXCEL

CAAT GO ON TOUR OF COUNTER TERROR EXPO

"Do you want a guided tour?"

This was not the response we expected when we turned up to protest against the Counter Terror Expo. CAAT, London CAAT and the Network for Police Monitoring (Netpol) had gathered outside the ExCeL Centre on June 19th with a banner, street theatre and leaflets.

But that's how CAAT's Media Coordinator and Netpol's Campaign Coordinator ended up being ushered through the ExCeL centre into the Counter Terror Expo.

"I worked one DSEI. I wouldn't do it again"

"We're not like DSEI" [Defence & Security Equipment International – the UK's biggest arms fair], event organiser David Townsend told us as he walked us through ExCeL's

main lobby, which was mainly full of people who were there to attend a travel show.

"I worked one DSEI. I wouldn't do it again," he continued. "I couldn't look my children in the eyes when I got home. I wouldn't do it again." He paused "We're really nothing like DSEI," he repeated.

Alongside senior police officers are alumni of the right-wing Henry Jackson Society and the now-dissolved Quilliam Foundation. These groups have a track record of promoting the idea that Muslims are a suspect community

Townsend was indeed very keen to show us another side to the expo. He highlighted the fact that it would be attended by victims of terrorist attacks, and he pointed

out some kit to protect venues from a repeat of the Manchester Arena attacks, and barriers that can be deployed instantly to prevent car attacks.

The expo itself is small, taking up just a few rows of stands alongside two areas with chairs for talks.

The PR spiel continued: "I don't really know why you're here. I support your right to protest here and I may not change your mind, but I don't understand when Europe's largest arms fair is taking place at the same time."

"You mean Eurosatory?" I asked, then explained, "Um...well that's in Paris. We're in London."

Selling an ideology

The Counter Terror Expo used to be owned by Clarion, the



company that owns DSEI, before it was sold to Evendia. Townsend claimed that he isn't supportive of Clarion's general defence portfolio and stance, and jumped at the chance to own Counter Terror outright.

He was certainly very keen to distance what he's doing from the arms trade, and admitted to making a mistake in using a militarised police officer in the event's publicity. He insisted that the work he's doing is intended to save lives.

But the reason we're protesting isn't just about what's on display. As Kevin Blowe, Netpol's Campaign Coordinator, highlights, "The soft sell of exhibitors at the Counter Terror Expo cannot detract from the reality that this event is also selling ideas – and its

invited speakers on the first day are revealing.

"Alongside senior police officers are alumni of the right-wing Henry Jackson Society and the now-dissolved Quilliam Foundation. These groups have a track record of promoting the idea that Muslims are a suspect community and arguing that too much attention has been focused on far-right groups. They are typical of the neoconservative "counter-terrorism industry" that is deeply embedded within state bodies and demands governments identify and undermine "extremist ideologies" through surveillance programmes like Prevent."

The underlying ideology and narrative that was sold to participants won't counter terrorism. It won't save lives. It will only devastate the lives of people wrongly targeted under it

Alternative viewpoints are not, after all, particularly hard to find. But it's obvious that it didn't occur to the event organisers to even try.

"You're famous"

Appearing genuinely relieved that we didn't use the opportunity of his tour to shout at terrorism survivors, Townsend escorted us out. As we exited he asked for my name. When I told him, he responded "Oh, you're famous."

I asked why.

"You were in our security briefing".

"Oh really?" I asked, thinking well, given my job, my name is regularly in the media. "What did they say?"

"You're known for spitting at people".

I was genuinely shocked. I've never spat at anyone in my life. It's not something I would do, and it's not something I've ever been accused of. I told him not to believe everything he heard in briefings and he agreed that I didn't seem the type.

I'm a middle aged white woman with all the privilege that confers. I felt indignant and angry, and honestly somewhat shaken that event organisers are being briefed that I'm a violent protester. But that's where the personal consequences end. This wouldn't be the case if I was Muslim, as Netpol's report into the policing of the Palestine protests clearly shows.

A climate of fear, rooted in racism

But this conversation encapsulates the heart of the issue with the Counter Terror Expo. It's part of the climate of fear rooted in racism, generated and perpetuated by faulty intelligence, often from the police, based on secretive files that individuals may not even know are being held on them, let alone be able to access and challenge. This creates a manufactured threat with a never-ending feedback loop that's exploited by the right for more racism, more repression and more surveillance.

I may have fallen for the PR spiel, but Townsend appeared genuine. He really did want to show us that he isn't one of the bad guys, and that he just wants to save lives. And no doubt some of the equipment on display can and will do that, but this isn't the point. The underlying ideology and narrative that was sold to participants won't counter terrorism. It won't save lives. It will only devastate the lives of people wrongly targeted under it. We won't counter terrorism unless we start rethinking security.

And if we're really serious about countering terrorism, then we need to accept the reality and the consequences of Britain's colonial past and present. We need to look at the terror Britain has caused and is creating across the world, and start making reparations for the damage we've done.

Unsurprisingly, the Counter-Terror Expo won't do this.

Unsurprisingly, we will carry on opposing it.

WILL A NEW GOVERNMENT MEAN A NEW APPROACH TO ARMS SALES?

July saw the election of a new Labour government, with Keir Starmer entering Downing Street. He has a big majority and a mandate for change, but will that make a difference to UK support for the arms industry?

The first thing to say is that support for arms sales has always been institutional rather than party-political, with Labour and Tory governments following pretty identical policies in the past.

Tony Blair, for example, was just as pro-arms trade as any Tory PM.

When it comes to nuclear weapons and arms budgets there is a very similar story, with the previous Labour government having been just as committed to Trident and maintaining eye-watering levels of military spending.

However, there are also some reasons to think that this Government may be more open to persuasion than some others have been.

There is a vocal anti-arms trade grouping of Labour MPs, including some who have worked with CAAT to highlight the terrible damage being done by UK arms sales to Israel in particular. However, some of them have already had the

Labour whip suspended for voting against the two-child benefit cap.

The election saw the loss of a lot of the SNP MPs who have been particularly strong on arms trade issues and who we have worked closely with us in the past. However it also saw the election of new Green MPs and Liberal Democrats, both of which parties having taken more critical lines on the arms trade.

David Lammy has already welcomed the Saudi regime into Downing Street for talks about “shared defence, economic & security interests.”

There are also a lot of reasons to be concerned.

There is a very strong group of pro-arms MPs in the Labour Party, with some in very senior positions. With such a large parliamentary majority, there will be less pressure on the government to listen to its critics

and more inclination to stick to the status quo.

When Keir Starmer ran to be Labour leader he said he would end arms exports to Saudi Arabia. However, he has downplayed that pledge and moved away from that position as he has got closer to Downing Street. Now it feels like there is little prospect of him doing so.

When in opposition, the new Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, was also a strong critic of arms exports to Saudi Arabia, going as far as branding them “a stain on the UK’s soul.” But, since taking office, he has already welcomed the Saudi regime into Downing Street for talks about “shared defence, economic and security interests.”

At time of writing there have been reports that the UK government has stopped licensing some types of weapons to Israel, with an announcement expected in the weeks ahead, although the Foreign Office has denied this and said it is undertaking a review.

Such a ban should be the bare minimum expected in the face of genocide, although it will be hard fought by the arms dealers and military establishment who do very well from the current system. The key demand from campaigners must be to ensure that any ban is permanent and watertight and that we don’t simply go back to business as usual straight after the bombs stop being dropped – which has been the case with previous restrictions on arms to Israel.

Whether or not any ban is finally introduced, it is clear that anti-arms trade campaigners will have a lot of work to do in the years ahead.



SCOTLAND AND THE ARMS TRADE

With a government taking office in Westminster, a lot of campaign groups have understandably focused on the Labour Party and its position on arms sales to Israel. However, there are also questions being asked north of the border about if the Scottish Government is doing everything it can do distance itself from genocide.

The Scottish Government has taken a very different position on the bombardment of Gaza from their UK counterparts. Former First Minister Humza Yousaf showed strong moral leadership against the killing and shared the pain of his family who were trapped in Gaza.

He was, and continues to be, one of the strongest critics of a UK policy that has put arms company profits ahead of the rights and lives of Palestinians.

At time of writing there are big questions being asked about the judgement of Mr Yousaf's successors.

In August the minister for external affairs, Angus Robertson, hosted a meeting with senior Israeli diplomat, Deputy Ambassador of Israel to the UK, Daniela Grudsky Ekstein. According to a Government spokesperson, the talks related to "areas of mutual interest, including culture, renewable energy, and engaging the country's respective diasporas."

The meeting was not disclosed until four days after it had

taken place, with the Scottish Government citing security concerns for the delay. As a result many people did not know it had taken place until the Deputy Ambassador had Tweeted about it.

This meeting, which has generated a lot of controversy and criticism, came after an International Court of Justice ruling that found that Israel is

committing crimes including apartheid and illegal occupation and long after the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor began seeking arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes committed against the people of Gaza.

Following widespread criticism, Robertson apologised for the impression given by the meeting and said there would be no more meetings between the Scottish Government and Israel until there was "real progress" in Gaza.

This meeting came after an ICJ ruling which found that Israel is committing crimes including apartheid and illegal occupation



Scottish Cabinet Secretary for External Affairs, Angus Robertson, and Deputy Ambassador Daniela Grudsky Ekstein

Public grants and contracts

Prior to his resignation, Mr Yousaf had agreed in principle to a proposed ban on eligibility for public grants and contracts for companies that had been identified by the United Nations as complicit in Israel's illegal occupation and settlements in the West Bank, stating that no company profiting from occupation should profit in Scotland too.

However, since then there have been little movement and no further updates on how this may happen and what progress is being made towards the desired result.

Scottish Enterprise

The Scottish Government does not have the power to stop arms sales, but one area that it does control is the grants made by Scottish Enterprise, a body that exists to promote business in Scotland.

Unfortunately Scottish Enterprise has poured money into some of the world's biggest arms giants, including BAE Systems, Leonardo and Raytheon, all of which have armed Israeli forces.

It is a reminder that while Westminster is responsible for UK arms sales, there is a role for all levels of government in stopping its deadly impacts. CAAT is working with MSPs from all parties to push for the Scottish government to take a stand and send a message of peace.



SUDAN: THE FORGOTTEN GENOCIDE, AND THE ROLE OF THE UAE

Since April 2023, civil war has been raging in Sudan, between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), which led a military coup in 2021, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a powerful militia formerly allied to the SAF.

Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed and 8.6 million displaced. The RSF have carried out large-scale massacres in Darfur. Both sides are using starvation as a weapon of war, and famine has already been declared in the Zamzam refugee camp in north Darfur, under siege by the RSF. UN experts warn millions could die.

The UK and the west are not arming Sudan. But their allies are. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has been supplying huge quantities

As the UK does not monitor arms after they are exported, it is impossible to guarantee that none of this equipment ended up in Sudan

of arms to the RSF, originating from many different countries. Some arms from the UAE found in Sudan were marked as made by UK companies. Meanwhile, Turkey has been arming the SAF.

The UK authorised £733 million worth of arms export licences to

the UAE between 2019–23.

As the UK does not monitor arms after they are exported, it is impossible to guarantee that none of this equipment ended up in Sudan. The USA and France are far bigger arms suppliers to the UAE.

There is no easy solution to the war, but as the “penholder” for Sudan at the UN Security Council, the UK could make greater diplomatic efforts, and western countries could end arms sales to the UAE and others fuelling it.

Edinburgh City Council bans arms company advertising

Arms manufacturers and fossil fuel companies will no longer be able to advertise on council-owned assets or offer sponsorships for events or partnerships in Scotland’s capital city. This means that relationships with arms companies will be prohibited as well as new contracts promoting “high carbon” products.

The call originally came from Scottish Greens Councillor Ben Parker who said, “it is unthinkable that the council should enter into contracts with arms companies whose weapons – which in some cases are manufactured here in the

city – are being used in the horrific and relentless bombardment of Palestine, at the same time as the Council has publicly called for a ceasefire.

“Today we have taken a clear step to say: we don’t need their money, we don’t want their money, and we don’t think it’s right for the Council to legitimise the practices of organisations whose business is to profit from war.”

Currently, the policy will apply to property and assets used or contracted out by the Council, for example, bus stops across the city, but will not apply to arms-length organisations such as Lothian buses or the Edinburgh



International Conference Centre.

All arms-length companies will be asked to follow this policy voluntarily. It is understood that Edinburgh Trams has already undertaken to comply with the policy, calling the continuation of the controversial tram advertising arms company Leonardo into question.

UNCOVERING THE SECRETS OF UK ARMS TRADE WITH ISRAEL

What arms does the UK supply to Israel, and what is their value?

Unfortunately these are not simple questions. For example, the Government and some commentators will likely tell you that only £18.2 million worth of arms were licensed in 2023.

However, seasoned CAAT News readers will know that this is just the value of “single” licences, and that it excludes the large quantity of arms that are exported using unlimited “open” licences – most notably the components for Israel’s F-35 combat aircraft that they’ve been using to bomb Gaza. Despite the name there is nothing open about these licences; they have far less transparency and allow arms sales to go through without having to provide a running total.

The UK arms industry makes 15% of the value of every F-35-fighter jet, and earlier this year CAAT published a map showing the UK companies involved in the F-35, based on information from a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. CAAT estimates that the value of UK components in the 39 F-35s received so far by Israel is at least £362 million.

That’s not counting spare parts. And aircraft involved in constant bombing campaigns need a mountain of them. At a Congressional hearing in December, US officials stated that they were delivering spares to Israel at “breakneck speed”.

UK companies are certainly involved in this spares pipeline. Another FOI revealed that in 2023, the “open general” licence covering the F-35 was used 14 times by UK companies to export components directly to Israel. (The quantities delivered are not revealed). In previous years, there were never more than five usages. This does not include components



exported to the US for new aircraft, so most likely relates to spare parts for Israel’s existing F-35 fleet.

There is still much we don’t know. But we are continuing to submit FOIs to try to break through the Government’s clouds of obfuscation and partial information one bit at a time.

Israel also has 36 more F-35s on order. Information compiled by Canadian colleagues shows that UK companies have \$7.8 billion in open contracts for F-35 production and sustainment relating to production lots that include planes for Israel. Of these contracts, \$6.6 billion is with UK arms giant BAE Systems. Exactly how much of this is for Israeli planes is unclear, but is likely to be in the hundreds of millions.

That’s not all. A lot of UK arms supplies to Israel go via the US, in the form of components incorporated into larger systems that are then delivered to Israel. The data regularly provided

by the Government shows which licences are for such incorporation and re-export, but not the ultimate recipients for each licence, a major gap in transparency.

But another FOI response revealed that between October 2021 and June 2023, the Government licenced £167.4 million worth of components to the US for which Israel was an authorised final destination. Of this, £97.8m was for components for combat aircraft, £42.1m was for components for military aero-engines, and £25.5m was for “launching/handling/control equipment for munitions,” all of which is the sort of equipment very likely to be used in Gaza. As these were all “single” licences, they likely do not include components for the F-35s, which go via the open general licence.

There is still much we don’t know. But we are continuing to submit FOIs to try to break through the Government’s clouds of obfuscation and partial information one bit at a time.

TROUBLE AT THE PAPER MILL

When CAAT published its “interactive map” of every UK F35 component manufacturer in February, local campaign groups around the country took notice.

The F35 aircraft has been used in war zones around the world, including by the Israeli air force to attack Palestinians in Gaza. In other words, the aircraft components are fueling genocide.

Many of the manufacturing sites were what might be expected from the deadly trade: part of the fuselage is made at BAE Systems in Samlesbury, and Leonardo in Edinburgh is involved in production of targeting systems.

However, some eagle-eyed researchers in Cumbria spotted a rather unexpected entry for a local company: Technical Fibre Products Limited, part of the James Cropper paper company based in Burneside, Kendal.

After some digging, it turned out that the company – a place where many people have worked, which has supported many art exhibitions, and even sponsored



Campaigners are calling on the company to think again, and are planning action to help get the word out

book prizes at schools – has a dark side.

A packed and energetic public meeting in Kendal in June heard that in addition to paper for printing books or making packaging, James Cropper also makes technical non-woven

products based on carbon fibre.

This is to control how parts of an aircraft appear on radars. This functionality is important for modern stealth fighter jets and is built into the F-35. Campaigners at the meeting were dismayed to learn these products have been used in military aircraft going back to the 1990s.

The frustrating thing for campaigners, other than finding their local company involved in the murky arms business, is that this kind of advanced carbon fibre technology is exactly what is needed for a sustainable energy future.

They are calling on the company to think again, and are planning action to help get the word out. If you would like to find out more or join the campaign, contact outreach@caat.org.uk and we will put you in touch.

Twickenham Kicks Arms Fair into Touch

The International Armoured Vehicles arms fair returned to the Rugby Football Union stadium in Twickenham earlier this year, and was met by a very large angry protest.

Called by Richmond and Kingston Palestine Solidarity Campaign and supported by CAAT and Kingston Peace Council among many others, campaigners made it very clear that they wanted their Rugby Stadium back from the arms trade.

So there were great celebrations in August when it was revealed that the arms fair will not be coming back to Twickenham next year but will instead be held in Farnborough.

It remains a worrying event,

with past exhibitors linked to conflicts around the world including BAE Systems, Leonardo, Lockheed Martin among others. CAAT will be supporting groups in Farnborough to take action

in resisting this deadly event.

Nevertheless it shows that the arms trade can be made unwelcome wherever it operates. Tanks out of Twickenham!



Arms trade books

Over the last few months we have seen the publication of new books exposing the arms trade.

Monstrous Anger of the Guns: How the Global Arms Trade is Ruining the World and What We Can Do About It is edited by CAAT Steering Committee member Rhona Michie as well as Andrew Feinstein from Shadow World Investigations and Paul Rogers from Bradford University. With contributions from Jeremy Corbyn and peace campaigners from different walks of life, it focuses on how the arms trade is run, who benefits from it and how we can stop it. The book is essential reading for anti-arms trade activists.

Nothing Personal: The Back Office of War by Nikita Teryoshin is a powerful photography collection that lifts the curtain on the arms trade. With access to arms fairs across the world, Teryoshin offers a rare and intimate insight into a secretive and shadowy industry.



Arms Out

Earlier this year Shadow World Investigations, Demilitarise Education, Forces Watch, Declassified UK and CAAT launched the Arms Out Tour.

The goal is to bring films, speakers and workshops to your local area to help boost knowledge of the arms trade and militarism, and to inspire action against it. We've had successful events across the country and are looking to do more.

If you'd like to bring the Arms Out Tour to your area, visit caat.org.uk/news/arms-out-tour-launched/ for more details



THEY SAID IT

"It's epic. It's the exact same as the real deal."

Arms industry sales rep promoting F-35 simulator at International Training Technology Exhibition arms fair, i News, April 12 2024

"The sector is booming, on the one hand repairing old equipment and on the other producing new stuff on steroids."

Researcher at the Institute of International Relations on the growth of the Czech arms industry, Balkan Insight, May 23 2024

"If we want peace, we must prepare for war."

European Council President Charles Michel, Reuters, March 18 2024



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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