

# CAAT NEWS

The quarterly magazine for Campaign Against Arms Trade

Issue 273  
Summer 2025



## STOP THE WAR MACHINE

### PLUS

UK military spending **P6-7**

10 years of war in Yemen **P11**

Protest rights under attack **P13**



**CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST  
ARMS  
TRADE**

A lot has changed since the last CAAT News. The bombing of Gaza has intensified and the war in Ukraine is entering a new stage. Arms companies have continued cashing in every step of the way.

We are months away from London hosting DSEI, one of the world's biggest arms fairs in the world. It'll be met with big protests, so check our centre pages to find out what is happening and how you can get involved.

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**Editor** Andrew Smith

**Design** Chris Woodward

**Proofreader** John Moseley

**Legal Consultant** Glen Reynolds

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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.

**Campaign Against Arms Trade**,  
Unit 1.9, The Green House, 244–254  
Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9DA  
Tel 020 7281 0297

**Email** [enquiries@caat.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@caat.org.uk)

**Web** [caat.org.uk](http://caat.org.uk)

**Twitter/X** @CAATuk

If you would like to stop being sent CAAT News, or change any of the ways that you hear from us, email [office@caat.org.uk](mailto:office@caat.org.uk)

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**Sadly, since the last issue of CAAT News, not only has Israel completely shattered the precarious ceasefire, the atrocities it is committing are escalating.**

Every day we wake up to yet more horrific news: more children killed, the decimation of Gaza's last remaining functioning hospital, aid workers deliberately targeted. These are war crimes. This is genocide.

Not only is our government still refusing to act, and actually take the decisions necessary to ensure the UK is not complicit in these heartbreaking violations of international law, just this week Foreign Secretary David Lammy welcomed his Israeli counterpart, Gideon Sa'ar, to the UK.

The most important of these decisions revolves around Israel: the F-35 combat aircraft and their spare parts. CAAT estimates that the value of the F-35s, including spare parts, is now over £500m. Israel is using these planes to drop 2000lb bombs on Gaza, and the UK is still supplying the spare parts needed to keep these planes operational through the global stockpile.

Despite admitting that Israel is not committed to upholding international law, and acknowledging that Israel

may be using these planes to commit war crimes, Lammy exempted the F35 license from this government's partial arms embargo. This decision makes a mockery of international law, and renders the UK's arms export controls meaningless.

*Despite acknowledging that Israel may be using these planes to commit war crimes, Lammy exempted the F35 license from this government's partial arms embargo*

However, this decision will be challenged in the courts in May when our friends at GLAN and Al-Haq's legal challenge against UK arms exports to Israel will be heard.

Much of the hearing, which is focussed on the F-35s, will be behind closed doors, as the government attempts to justify this utterly immoral decision on national security grounds. CAAT is supporting the case, supplying both a witness statement and organising a presence outside the court.

Meanwhile, other legal actions are underway. GLAN also submitted an application for an arrest warrant for Sa'ar after discovering the news of his secret visit. And the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) and the Interest Law Centre (PILC) have filed a complaint of war crimes against 10 Britons, based on a 240-page report.

Whether it's government ministers, civil servants, arms companies, those involved in the supply chain, or UK citizens directly involved in committing war crimes in Gaza – all those involved in facilitating and enabling Israel's genocide must be held to account.

International law exists for a reason: it guarantees all our safety. If we start ignoring it, if we start making exemptions, then there are no longer any limits to what is acceptable. This is beyond horrific for Palestinian people, and it is deeply worrying for every single person who wants to see a peaceful world, not one run in the interests of arms dealers.



# ARMS TRADE SHORTS

## India

The Indian government has agreed to a \$7.4 billion deal to buy 26 French-made Rafale marine fighter jets. Negotiations for the deal began in 2023.

The deal, which was approved by a committee that included Indian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is reported to include four twin-seater trainer aircraft, the maintenance of 36 Rafale fighters and 22 jets designed for a single pilot.

**Gulf News, 10/4/2025**



Photo: Kremlin.ru | Source: Wikimedia

## United Kingdom

UK arms companies are reportedly being refused bank accounts by some of the UK's biggest financial institutions over ethical concerns.

One company that makes armoured vehicles used by the UK military, including by Special Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, is reported to have been declined for a bank account by HSBC while others have allegedly struggled to get loans or investment for future manufacturing.

**i News, 15/4/2025**

Oxford Council has voted to boycott companies complicit in the ongoing assault on Gaza.

The motion, which was passed unanimously, called on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to divest from companies involved in "grave violations of human rights" such as through the "production of weapons" and any military technology that could be used to commit violations of international law.

**Middle East Monitor, 26/3/2025**



Photo: Defence Imagery | Source: Flickr

## Turkey

The Turkish government has suggested that it is willing to purchase billions of dollars worth of spare parts, ammunition and electronics if the US is prepared to lift sanctions on it. The sanctions were applied after Turkey purchased Russian S-400 missile systems.

**Middle East Eye, 10/4/2025**

## European Union

EU leaders have supported an €800 billion military spending plan. The plan is focused on increasing spending on European-made weapons and includes commitment to joint procurement. It is widely seen as part of a strategy of moving away from reliance on the US.

**Defense News, 21/3/2025**

## Lockheed Martin

US arms giant Lockheed Martin has secured a contract worth almost \$5 billion to produce Precision Strike Missiles for the US military. It is said to be able to "neutralise" targets at over 400 km in distance.

**Reuters.com, 31/3/2025**

## NATO

New figures from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute show that NATO countries accounted for over 80% of global arms exports from 2020–2024, with the US alone accounting for over half of the total.

**People's Dispatch, 18/3/2025**

The UK government has pledged new money for drones and lasers as part of a military spending hike that they say will "revolutionise" the military and turn the UK into a "a defence industrial superpower."

As a result, four Navy warships will get DragonFire laser weaponry, which uses intense light beams to cut through targets.

**The Guardian, 26/3/2025**

# Greece

The Greek government has announced a \$27 billion “rearmament programme.” At its heart is a multi-layered military system called the Shield of Achilles.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has described it as “essentially a dome combining existing air defences with new systems, offering protection on five levels: anti-missile, anti-ballistic, anti-aircraft, anti-ship, anti-submarine and anti-drone.”  
**Al Jazeera, 3/4/025**

# Australia

Israeli forces have tested Australian-made anti-drone weapons systems. The Australian government has maintained that it has not supplied arms or ammunition to Israel since the start of the assault on Gaza. It is believed that in this case Australian-made components were sent to the US for assembly before being shipped to Israel and did not require Australian export approval.  
**ABC.net, 10/4/2025**

# China

The Chinese government is trying to capitalise on declining Russian arms exports by increasing its sales to Central Asia. In recent months it has reportedly sold drones to Kazakhstan and anti-aircraft systems to Uzbekistan. Reports also suggest Uzbekistan is considering buying Chinese-made fighter jets.  
**EurAsiaNet.org, 8/4/025**

# US

The US government has approved the sale of advanced precision kill weapon systems to Saudi Arabia, in a deal reported to be worth \$100 million.

The deal is said to include 2000 of the systems, which are designed to shoot down drones, as well as associated training. The principal contractor will be BAE Systems.  
**Al Jazeera, 21/3/2025**

## Largest arms exporters

Our friends at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute have published arms export data covering 2020–2024.

Ukraine became the world’s largest importer of major arms in the period, with imports increasing nearly 100 times over compared with 2015–19. European arms imports grew by 155% between the same periods. The United States further increased its share of global arms exports to 43 per cent, while Russia’s exports fell by 64 per cent.

	Share of global arms exports 2020–24 (%)	Per cent change from 2015–19 to 2020–24*
 <b>United States</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>↑ 21</b>
 <b>France</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>↑ 11</b>
 <b>Russia</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>↓ 64</b>
 <b>China</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>↓ 5.4</b>
 <b>Germany</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>–2.6</b>
 <b>Italy</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>↑ 138</b>
 <b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>↓ 1.4</b>
 <b>Israel</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>↓ 2.0</b>
 <b>Spain</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>↑ 29</b>
 <b>South Korea</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>↑ 4.9</b>
 <b>Turkey</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>↑ 103</b>
 <b>Netherlands</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>↓ 36</b>
 <b>Poland</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>↑ 4,031</b>
 <b>Sweden</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>↑ 73</b>
 <b>Norway</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>↑ 187</b>

\* Figures show the change in volume of the total arms exports per exporter between the two periods.





# UK MILITARY SPENDING

UK military spending is soaring – and the price is being paid by sick and disabled people here, and by people in the Global South that benefit from life-saving aid.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves's Spring Statement allocated an additional £2.2 billion to the Ministry of Defence in 2025/26, over and above current plans, to rise to £6.4 billion by 2027/28, reaching the manifesto pledge of increasing military spending to 2.5% of GDP.

Beyond that, they are aiming to reach 3% of GDP by 2030. The government claims this is needed

to counter the potential threat posed by Russian militarism and expansionism, and the increase in "global uncertainty" – code for the Trump regime's upending of US foreign policy in relation to Europe, Russia, and Ukraine.

The government made the choice to fund this additional military spending, pound for pound, through drastic cuts to

Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from 0.5% to 0.3% of GDP. This comes on top of large cuts to ODA by the Tories.

This move will certainly cost lives among the world's most vulnerable populations, and harm global development, ultimately worsening UK security as well. At the same time, the government is slashing benefits for sick and



disabled people as a way of “balancing the books”. CAAT has strongly condemned this choice of warfare over welfare.

Across Europe, politicians are insisting that massive rearmament is needed to prevent Russian forces from overrunning Europe once the war in Ukraine is finished. The EU has unveiled an €800 billion “ReArm Europe” plan, including easing of fiscal rules, loans from the EU budget, and mobilising private capital.

The fearmongering narrative we are fed is that Europe is “defenceless” in the face of an all-powerful Russia, and possible withdrawal of US support.

But let’s get real. Russia has been held to a grinding stalemate in Ukraine, a country with less than a third of its population and, at the start of the war, less than

a tenth of its GDP.

European NATO members together have vastly more people and economic resources than Russia, spend 3.5 times as much on their militaries – even as Russia is in the midst of an all-out war – and have far more troops, aircraft, naval vessels, and other forces.

*Part of the problem is that so much UK military spending is wasted on hugely expensive prestige projects that end up running massively over budget and schedule, and often failing to deliver*

Part of the problem is that so much UK military spending is wasted on hugely expensive prestige projects that are very good for the arms companies that make them, but end up running massively over budget and schedule, and often

failing to deliver. The UK is also still addicted to projecting itself as a “global power”, sending aircraft carrier groups to the Pacific, utterly irrelevant to European defence. But that is no reason to spend even more!

We must dismantle the myth that this rush to militarisation will make us safer, and reject the government’s rebranding of the arms trade as UK defence.

This decision not only diverts both money and attention from the single, greatest and most urgent threat to humanity – the climate crisis – it does so at the expense of driving millions into destitution. This abhorrent decision will not bring security, it will only line the pockets of arms dealers who must be rubbing their grubby little fingers in glee at this government’s complete lack of humanity.

# Arms to Ukraine

**The re-election of Donald Trump has brought a lot of changes to US policy, whether it is in terms of the tariffs that the administration has applied or huge cuts to international aid.**

One of the most high-profile departures from the Biden government has been in terms of the US approach to Ukraine, where Trump’s approach has been to support Russia and Vladimir Putin and to reduce military support for Ukraine.

This was highlighted by an unprecedented press conference in the White House, in which President Trump and Vice President JD Vance belittled, humiliated and threatened Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The scenes, which came only days after UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer offered Trump a state visit, were met with shock by European leaders.

With the US backing away from Ukraine and demanding NATO countries spend even more on weapons, we have seen European

leaders promising cuts to inflate their military budgets, and, unless we resist it, it will be the most vulnerable who will pay the price.

Global arms dealers have made huge profits since the war in

Ukraine began, with European countries massively rearming, doubling down on the very militarism that has created so much death and suffering in Ukraine, and elsewhere.



Photo: Keldbach | Source: Deviant Art





# STOP DSEI

The DSEI arms fair is scheduled to return from 9th–12th September 2025.

One of the world's largest arms industry events, "Defence and Security Equipment International" (DSEI) takes place every two years at the ExCel centre in London Docklands.

It's a festival of violence and features prominent displays of warships, fighter jets, tanks, missiles, artillery, ammunition, as well as space, medical, tech and industrial sections.

Its goal is to bring arms buyers and arms dealers together, and to give them privileged access to UK government ministers and military officials so that they can push for new deals.

It will be attended by all parts of an industry that spreads death and destruction around the world, not

least in Gaza, but also in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

All the world's biggest arms companies will be there including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, BAE Systems who have all profited from arms sales to Israel and who will be among 1600 other exhibitors.

The organisers are expecting some 45,000 people to go, including delegations from some of the world's worst regimes.

Exactly who will be there, at the invitation of the UK government, is kept secret until the first day of the fair, but attendees will include repressive regimes, dictatorships and countries that are at war.

Past years have included military

representation from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, all of which have a history of involvement in fuelling human rights abuses and conflicts like the Yemen civil war which saw hundreds of war crimes and thousands of civilians killed

*DSEI's goal is to bring arms buyers and arms dealers together, and to give them privileged access to UK government ministers and military officials so that they can push for new deals*

Israel and Turkey are expected to have pavilions where they will market their "battle-tested" weapons, by which they mean weapons used to kill Palestinian



# Kick Israel out of DSEI!

CAAT is starting its campaign against DSEI 2025 with a Kick Israel out of DSEI campaign. On our website, you can sign our petition, get leaflets and stickers, and keep up-to-date with the latest campaign updates.

While there are so many reasons to oppose DSEI, it is clear that if Israeli companies and Israeli delegations are allowed to attend then the government, event organisers, Clarion Events, and the ExCeL Centre will all be complicit in the most horrific war crimes.

Israel almost always plays a prominent role at DSEI, with the UK government inviting official Israeli government delegations. If this happens in 2025, it will be our government rolling out the red carpet to legitimise and enable war criminals coming to shop for even deadlier weapons to wage their genocide against Palestinian people.

In 2023, in addition to Brigadier General Dr Danny Gold, head of directorate of defense research and development for the Israeli Ministry of Defence giving a keynote speech, Israel had its own country pavilion with 48 domestic Israeli arms companies exhibiting at the event. These are companies that are directly responsible for, and directly profiting from, Israel's genocide in Gaza and the war crimes it is committing in the West Bank and Lebanon. For example, Elbit Systems provides 80% of the drones that the Israeli military use in Palestine.

Despite Israel's horrific war crimes, despite the ICJ finding that it was plausible that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, despite the ICC issuing arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence minister, Yoav Gallant, despite this government imposing a partial arms suspension and finding that Israel is not committed to complying with international law, it looks like it will be business as usual for Israel at DSEI 2025.

Israel is already confirmed as having a country pavilion at

DSEI 2025. This will be a huge opportunity for Israeli companies to market military equipment that is no longer just "battle-tested" but now genocide-tested, on a global level.

While we hope, given the clear moral and legal case, this campaign will be successful, our protests and opposition to DSEI will continue regardless.

*Israel is already confirmed as having a pavilion at DSEI. This will be a huge opportunity for Israeli companies to market military equipment that is now genocide-tested, on a global level.*

Even if Israeli delegations and companies are banned, plenty of domestic arms companies, such as BAE Systems – the main UK producer of the 15% of F-35 combat aircraft that is made in the UK, and that Israel is using to drop 2000lb bombs on Gaza – will still have a massive presence. They will be joined by top arms companies like Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, which supply many of the arms Israel is using in Gaza.

Every company and government body responsible for Israel's inclusion at DSEI is complicit in aiding and abetting Israel's genocide and the commission of war crimes.

We will be on the streets opposing it. We hope that you'll be able to join us.

and Kurdish civilians. CAAT has launched a petition demanding Israel is excluded from DSEI due to Israel's ongoing genocide of Palestinian people in Gaza.

Resistance is expected! Stop the Arms Fair network, ([stopthearmsfair.org.uk](http://stopthearmsfair.org.uk)) will be coordinating different days of action both during the fair and in the days leading up to it.

Get involved! There will be outreach events and training taking place over the summer. Keep an eye out for these on the Stop the Arms Fair page, and on the CAAT Events page ([caat.org.uk/events](http://caat.org.uk/events)).



# STEPPING UP PRESSURE OVER F-35 SALES TO ISRAEL

Last September, the UK government finally suspended 29 arms export licences to Israel for use by the Israeli military in Gaza, admitting that Israel was not following international law, and that there was a “clear risk” that equipment exported by the UK would be used to commit or facilitate violations.

It was too little too late, and they shamefully exempted the supply of components for Israel’s US-made F-35 aircraft, which are used in the bombing of Gaza, provided the components go via the US or another partner country, rather than directly to Israel.

These F-35 components are by far the largest portion of UK arms exports to Gaza, and are essential to keep Israel’s planes in operation, enabling them to commit more atrocities.

Since the decision, Israel has received three more new F-35s from the US, 15% of each of which is built in the UK along with a large but unknown volume of spare parts. Overall, CAAT estimates that the value of UK components supplied to Israel for the F-35s since 2016 is over £500 million.

CAAT has continued to step up pressure on the government over its continuing support for Israel’s genocide through the F-35 programme.

In February, CAAT coordinated and published an open letter signed by 232 organisations worldwide, addressed to the governments of the F-35 Partner Nations: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the UK, and the US, calling on them to halt the supply of F-35s and their components to Israel.

In many of these countries, there have been either restrictions imposed on arms sales to Israel, and/or legal challenges to these sales; but all are currently continuing to allow at least the indirect supply of F-35 components to Israel.

The US, of course, has continued

to provide huge quantities of arms to Israel, almost without limitation. This letter received widespread coverage and showed that opposition to arming the genocide is global and internationally connected.

*We are always being told how rigorous and robust UK arms export controls are, but time and again the government has refused to apply even the most basic standards*

At Westminster, independent MP Zarah Sultana (formerly Labour, with the whip suspended), has introduced a Private Members Bill, the Arms Trade (Inquiry and Suspension) Bill, which would require the government to conduct an inquiry covering the end-use of UK arms exports, the compliance of recipient states with international law, and the effectiveness of the UK’s export licensing criteria.

It would also require an immediate suspension to all arms export licenses to “high risk” states, where it cannot be demonstrated that the equipment will not be used in violation of international law. Israel is one of the recipients foremost in the minds of the Bill’s proponents.

We are always being told how rigorous and robust UK arms export controls are, but time and again the government has refused to apply even the most basic standards.

The Bill was presented in the House of Commons for its First Reading in January, and was listed for its Second Reading on March 14, but as it was well down the order paper for the day, it was not debated. It is listed again for May 16th, where again it is unlikely to be debated. CAAT is calling on supporters to contact their MP to urge them to support this crucial bill.



Photo: Arianase | Source: GoodFrom.com



# 10 YEARS SINCE THE SAUDI-LED BOMBING OF YEMEN

It has been 10 years since Saudi-led forces began an assault on Yemen.

Beginning in March 2015, the coalition of countries began a campaign of bombing and blockade. These attacks were fuelled by UK weapons: CAAT estimates some £30 billion worth were sold to the Saudi-led coalition, mostly planes, bombs, missiles and their components.

The war saw total deaths in Yemen go past 377,000 at the end of 2021, according to the UN. These were caused by the bombing of homes, schools, medical facilities, factories in over 25,000 air raids: with lives lost both directly in the attacks and indirectly due to famine, disease and lack of medical care.

While the Saudi-led attacks have now mostly ended, the country has been repeatedly bombed this year and last by warplanes from the US, UK and Israel. Attacks in March 2025 alone injured and killed more than 100 people. The country remains in the grip of a humanitarian crisis, with millions still relying on international food aid.

Campaigners from London CAAT marked the anniversary outside Downing Street by hosting a vigil. They were joined by speaker Ruth Rohde from Shadow World Investigations, heard a solidarity message from Yemeni journalist Ahmad Alghobary, and sang peace songs led by Raised Voices choir.

Speaking at the vigil, Ruth Rohde said, “It continues to be the case that the relationship with Saudi Arabia is put ahead of the lives of hundreds

of thousands of people, and for years this has been the case.”

The vigil closed with the naming of some of the dead from the conflict, and ten minutes of silence – one minute for each year of the war.

It is high time that the continued bombing of Yemen ceased, and the needs of its people – for food, medicine, employment – were put ahead of the interests of powerful countries and profits from arms companies.



## Scottish Government support for arms companies

In March the Scottish Parliament debated grants to companies implicated in arms sales and military support for Israel.

The Scottish Government has been a long-term opponent of the assault on Gaza, but has continued to fund complicit arms companies via its business unit, Scottish Enterprise.

The motion, which was brought by the Scottish Greens, was unsuccessful, with the SNP using a wrecking amendment to block it.

However, it has resulted in the Scottish Government committing to a new set of human rights checks for all grants, something that was supported by parties across the Chamber.

We will be keeping an eye on the process and calling for it to be as robust as possible, as any ethical test that allows support for war profiteers is clearly unfit for purpose. We will update CAAT News readers once we know what form these checks will take.



Photo: Jorge Franganillo | Source: Wikimedia



# OUR RIGHT TO PROTEST IS UNDER ATTACK

Our right to protest, especially in England and Wales, is under attack – and we're starting to see and face the full impact of the draconian legislation brought in by the previous government to clampdown on our right to dissent.

In the words of the Network for Police Monitoring's (Netpol) latest report into the state of protest in 2024, "This is repression."

The report's findings make sobering reading. From increasingly harsh jail sentences, to increasing levels of police surveillance, alongside using strict pre-charge bail conditions to target and harass campaigners, and efforts to equate pro-Palestinian protests with extremism and hate crime, there is no denying that that the situation is bleak for all of us who are regularly taking to the streets.

Meanwhile Palestine Action activists, the Filton 18, are being held on remand, with the CPS claiming a spurious and disturbing "terrorist connection" to their alleged offences.

Those taking action to dismantle the Israeli war machine that is complicit in genocide are not terrorists – and it's essential that we all stand in solidarity with those being targeted by these powers. Find out more about

how to support prisoners at [palestineaction.org](https://palestineaction.org)

Unfortunately, not only is the Labour government not repealing the previous protest laws, it is adding to them.

*Those taking action to dismantle the Israeli war machine are not terrorists – and it's essential that we all stand in solidarity with those being targeted by these powers*

The new Policing and Crime Bill, currently making its way through parliament, seeks to criminalise mask-wearing at protests, alongside banning flares and making it an offence to climb war memorials.

A further amendment will allow the police to ban protests near places of worship. Just one day after Home Secretary Yvette Cooper announced this amendment, the Met Police broke down the door of a Quaker Meeting House and arrested six members of Youth Demand who

were meeting there. You couldn't make it up!

But repression also breeds resistance. Despite the treatment of the Filton 18, almost daily actions against arms factories are still taking place.

If the state hoped the use of terrorism powers would deter protesters, it clearly hasn't worked. Meanwhile, Youth Demand saw a surge in donations and sign ups following the Quaker Meeting House raid.

However, if you are involved in protests, there's a few things you can do to keep yourself safe – and whether you're new to protest, or have been participating for too many years to count, Netpol's guide to activist security is well worth a read.

We're not going to pretend this new climate of repression isn't scary, or that it doesn't affect us. But the government and the UK arms trade is complicit in genocide and we refuse to be intimidated and we will not be silent. See you on the streets!



# CAAT ANNUAL REPORT

In March, CAAT published our Annual Report on UK Arms Exports in 2023, drawing together data from numerous sources, governmental and otherwise.

With the lack of transparency in the global arms trade, where each source provides only partial information, this allows for a much more comprehensive view of trends and developments.

Overall, the different sources give an ambiguous picture of the trend in UK arms exports, with some showing increases and others decreases.

However, arms exports remain at a generally high level by historic standards, except for complete systems such as aircraft and warships. A large proportion of UK exports are components, subsystems, and military services such as the ongoing maintenance of the Saudi Air Force by BAE Systems, worth

over £2.5 billion a year.

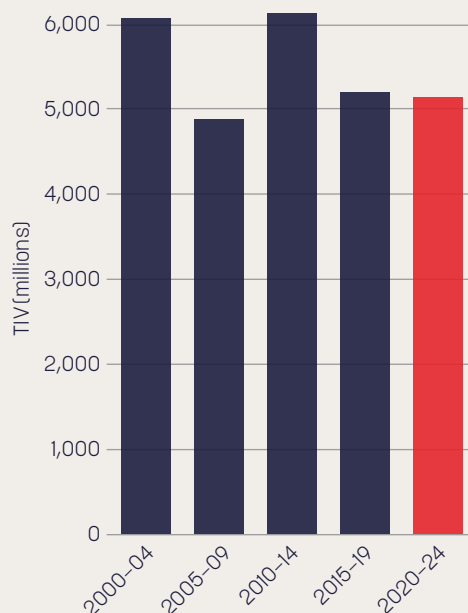
One trend that is very clear is a huge increase in arms sales to Europe, which have more than quadrupled over the past decade.

This reflects a trend to European rearmament which began before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but which has accelerated since.

Conversely, the share of UK arms exports to customers in the Middle East, traditionally the main recipient region, has decreased significantly. However, with potential new major orders from Qatar and Turkey, this may be a temporary lull.

The report can be downloaded at [caat.org.uk/publications/trends-in-uk-arms-exports-in-2023](https://caat.org.uk/publications/trends-in-uk-arms-exports-in-2023)

## Volume of UK exports of major weapons 2000–2024



## No warplanes for fascist Erdoğan!

Recently, negotiations between the UK and Turkey for the sale of 40 Eurofighter Typhoon combat aircraft to the latter (see CAAT News 272, p6) have intensified. The UK submitted a price proposal to Turkey in March, following a Turkish request.

Turkey has been searching for a new fighter for several years, since the US kicked them out of the F-35 programme in 2019. Until recently, Germany – which jointly manufactures the Eurofighter along with the UK, Spain, and Italy – had blocked any sale due to concerns over Turkey's appalling human rights record and military occupation of parts of the Kurdish-majority Rojava region of north-east Syria, but they withdrew these objections last year.

However, these concerns remain very valid, and indeed

the situation has worsened since last year.

The autocratic Erdoğan regime has launched a huge crackdown on protesters and dissidents in recent months, arresting thousands, with particularly heavy repression, as usual, against the Kurdish minority.

In March, the popular opposition mayor of Istanbul and likely rival to Erdoğan at the next Presidential election, Ekrem İmamoğlu, was arrested and charged with spurious terrorism offences, leading to massive protests and further repression.

In Syria's autonomous Rojava region, Turkey and its allies have stepped up attacks since the overthrow of dictator Bashar al-Assad late in 2024, by Turkish-allied forces. Turkey has bombed a dam, cutting off water and electricity to the Kurdish majority

city of Kobane, and in late January bombed a market place killing 8 civilians.

The Eurofighter deal has not yet been sealed, which means now is the best chance to oppose it. The DSEI arms fair (see p8–9), where Turkey will likely have a large presence, will be another focus for protests.



Photo: President of Ukraine | Source: Wikimedia

# BOYCOTT BLOODY INSURANCE!

Last month, a coalition of organisations under the heading **Boycott Bloody Insurance** launched a campaign of the same name, publishing a series of reports detailing the involvement of global insurance companies, such as Allianz, Aviva, Axa, and Zurich, in supporting the arms, fossil fuel, and border industries.

For the arms industry, two reports covered their support for companies producing “controversial weapons” (nuclear weapons, white phosphorous, and depleted uranium), and those supporting Israel’s genocide in Gaza. Unsurprisingly, many companies fall into both categories.

*All of the big global insurers have investments in the arms industry, but of the major companies covered by the report, Aviva had by far the largest*

The insurance industry’s support for these destructive companies comes in two forms: providing various forms of insurance for the companies, and investing their huge funds (from customer premiums, as well as other products they may sell such as pension funds) in the companies.

There is very little information on the former, except that in the UK, there is a record of who provides every company’s Employer’s Liability Insurance, a legal requirement to operate. Investment records of the big

insurers are available through a variety of sources.

All of the big global insurers have investments in the arms industry, but of the major companies covered by the report, Aviva had by far the largest – both in producers of “controversial weapons” and armers of Israel, in terms of total investments and share of the insurer’s investment portfolio.

CAAT is pleased to support and endorse these reports and the accompanying campaign, and

we encourage supporters to look at who their insurers are funding and insuring, and look into alternatives. The campaign website ([BoycottBloodyInsurance.org](https://BoycottBloodyInsurance.org)) includes a guide on how to switch insurers.



**BOYCOTT  
BLOODY  
INSURANCE**

## Ethical investments

Even at a time when UK-made weapons are playing a central role in the Israeli destruction of Gaza, there are arms dealers trying to pretend that what they do is morally upstanding and right.

Unfortunately they are not the only ones. In March, over 100 Labour MPs and peers used an open

letter to call on banks and investment firms to relax their rules on support for arms companies.

There is little evidence of bank investment policies curbing an arms trade that is, unfortunately, booming, but this is part of attempts to try to detoxify an industry that profits from death and destruction around the world.

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# KEEP CAAT CAMPAIGNING

2025 is a DSEI year. That means that it's a year when the world's worst arms dealers return to London in September for one of the world's largest arms fairs. The horrific market of death happens with frightening regularity every other year (the odd ones, of course).

As you know and expect, CAAT will be on the streets with you, our supporters, opposing it and making sure that the exhibitors know they are not welcome in London or, indeed, anywhere.

But this comes at a cost. Campaigning against the arms trade (campaigning for peace) is not recognised as a charitable objective, which is why we need to appeal to you for the funding to underpin our resistance, as there are no charitable grants towards this essential work.



Not only do we organise demonstrations ourselves but we also support many organisations with whom we act in solidarity, using our contacts, research, and experience. It all uses staff time, which comes at a financial cost; even the time and occasional expenses incurred by our dedicated volunteers must be planned and supported.

Our help also can include providing funding for long-distance travel, essential comforts (portaloos, tea and coffee, etc.), assistance for those who have difficulty navigating London or who need special mobility arrangements, all as well as publishing large amounts of social and other media.

Please continue to help us fund this work, we are entirely dependent on the voluntary donations from a wide range of supporters for our campaigning work to continue.

## You can support us in several ways:



**Take out a Direct Debit**, to make a regular monthly donation to suit your budget



**Make a one-off donation of any amount** by card or BACS



If you have been supporting CAAT over the years and want to see us continuing this work, **please consider including a legacy to CAAT in your Will**

**Please Keep CAAT campaigning by supporting us now.**

## THEY SAID IT

**"There's no reason for us to be building brand new nuclear weapons, we already have so many... You could destroy the world 50 times over, 100 times over. And here we are building new nuclear weapons, and they're building nuclear weapons"**

Donald Trump quoted on Associated Press, 14/2/2025

**"This boom in the defence sector is not something they should be missing out on. To the contrary – they should be piling in. All our pension schemes should be piling in. It is the right thing to do financially and, yes, ethically"**

James Moore, writing for the Independent, 7/3/2025

**"Refusing to invest in weapons production is moral bankruptcy"**

Headline in the Daily Telegraph, 7/3/2025

**"We have weaponry that nobody has any idea what it is and it is the most powerful weapons in the world that we have"**

Donald Trump, quoted in NewsWeek, 10/4/2025

# DONATE TODAY!

You can donate to CAAT by either visiting our website at [caat.org.uk](http://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).

## Personal details

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel:  Email:

I would like to receive the CAAT News quarterly magazine by post: ☐ Yes ☐ No

I would like to receive updates about the campaign and urgent action opportunities by email: ☐ Yes ☐ No

I would like to receive occasional updates about the campaign by post: ☐ Yes ☐ No

## 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

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society:

Banks/building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions from some kind of accounts.

Address of Bank/Building Society:

Postcode:

Name(s) of account holder(s):

Bank/building society a/c no.

Sort code:

I wish to donate £  every

☐ month ☐ quarter ☐ annually

Reference (CAAT use only)

Please pay Campaign Against Arms Trade Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Campaign Against Arms Trade and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s):

Date:

## Single donation

☐ I wish to donate £  to CAAT and enclose a cheque or have completed my credit/debit card details.

### CARD details

Credit/debit card type (please tick appropriate box): ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Visa Delta

Cardholder's name:

Credit/debit card number:

Start date:  Expiry date:  Security number:  (3 digit number on back of card)