

CANADA'S

ROLE

IN

ARMING

ISRAEL

What We Know, and Further Questions

Prepared by **World BEYOND War, Labour For Palestine, & Labour Against the Arms Trade**



MP Julie Dzerowicz wrote the following in response to questions raised by constituents at the Zoom townhall she held in November:

Is Canada supplying arms to Israel?

The report by Global Affairs Canada in 2022 states that Canada exported over \$21 million dollars worth of military goods and technology to Israel. Since our Zoom meetings, I have followed up directly to our Minister of Defence, the Hon Bill Blair to ask if Canada is supplying arms or technology to the current Israel – Hamas – Palestinian War & Conflict. He said to me that Canada is not providing arms or any military support to Israel. This includes no weapons and no ammunition.

Any military personnel in the region are working for Canada's Head of mission at the Canadian Embassy to provide protection and assist with repatriation of Canadians.

In short: While we wish this were the case, unless Canada has secretly canceled hundreds of active permits to export weapons to Israel, MP Dzerowicz' assertion that Canada is not providing arms to Israel is patently untrue. Frankly, we're unsure if MP Dzerowicz is deliberately deceiving her constituents or is deeply ignorant of Canada's relations with Israel. It seems likely that she is conflating the question of whether the Canadian military itself is sending direct military aid to Israel with the broader arms trade that exists between Canada and Israel (where



Canadian companies sell millions of dollars worth of military goods to Israel each year).

If we were to take MP Dzerowicz and Minister Blair at their word, that would mean that the hundreds of existing military export permits to Israel have been revoked since October 7 and that Canada has indeed secretly imposed an arms embargo on Israel. This would be excellent if true and we would welcome that news.

Unfortunately what we may instead be seeing is an effort by the Liberal government to misconstrue and misrepresent what is actually happening instead of responding to constituents' demands for an immediate arms embargo on Israel.

What We Know

In order to export military goods, Canadian manufacturers must obtain permits under the Export and Import Permits Act (EIPA).

Each year, Global Affairs Canada must deliver a report to Parliament to provide information on the export of military goods and technology from Canada in a given calendar year.

According to the Government of Canada's 2022 Exports of Military Goods report:

While Israel wasn't Canada's largest export destination by value of military goods, exporters to Israel made use of the most export permits last year (315).



Table 7: 2022 - Top twelve non-U.S. destinations: utilized export permits for military goods & technology

Destination	Number of Permits Utilized in 2022
Israel	315
United Kingdom	290
Germany	188
France	126
Australia	96
Netherlands	84

Additionally, according to [Table 9](#), Canada issued 199 new permits for exports destined for Israel, the second largest number of permits issued by destination last year (different from the number actually used), and second only to

Britain (for which 429 permits were issued).

Analysis of Dzerowicz Response #1

In the answer she provided constituents denying that Canada is arming Israel, MP Dzerowicz appears to be conflating:

1. The export of military goods and services to Israel (sales by Canadian companies of military goods to the Israeli military, as referred to by the Global Affairs Canada report she cites in her answer), with

2. the possibility of the Canadian military sending weapons or military aid to Israel (which we can only assume is what Minister Bill Blair is affirming is not happening).



While it is good to have Defense Minister Blair confirm that the latter is not happening and that the Canadian military is not itself supplying weapons directly to Israel at this time, the calls to MP Dzerowicz from her constituents (and to all MPs) were for Canada to end the export of all arms to Israel via the hundreds of export permits currently in place (approved by Global Affairs Canada).

- It's not just a question of whether Canada has sent shipments of missiles to Israel in the past 6-8 weeks. Canada has been arming Israel despite it being an apartheid state, and those arms are now being used in Gaza.
- It is odd that MP Dzerowicz consulted with Minister of National Defence Bill Blair on this matter and not with

Melanie Joly, since as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joly has authority over export permits.

- Blair's comments contradict this GOC Report: [2022 Exports of Military Goods](#). There are several ways to interpret this:

1. He and the government are lying.
2. They are being evasive (i.e. they mean no new shipments, but are being evasive around existing and future contracts and export permits).
3. They have stopped all arms shipments quietly, in which case they should be pressured to announce this as a policy publicly (i.e. committing to a unilateral embargo). This would be major if true.



- If Canada is not currently exporting arms to Israel, then an arms embargo is much easier to impose. Remember one of the Liberals' big excuses for not canceling the Saudi deal is that Canada would incur a massive penalty. So if there are no current contracts, as is claimed, they can commit to not issuing any new permits for export or import.
- That said, there are precedents for canceling permits: the Canadian government did manage to flip the switch on export & brokering permits to Russia quickly following its invasion of Ukraine, in spite of pre-existing contracts and related liabilities. Canada stopped issuing new permits and canceled existing ones. (See below and [here](#) for more info.) They did something similar with [Turkiye](#) in 2021, canceling export permits and putting a policy of presumptive denial for new ones in place.
- It's important to remember that much of Canada's military exports are components for US weapons and military aircraft which are assembled in the US (exports to the US aren't covered by the above report) and then exported on to their buyers, including the Israeli military. Blair may be using this fact to make his claim that Canada is not arming Israel. But the data in the [GOC report](#) indicates that the \$20-30 million (\$21,329,783.93 is reported in [Table 6](#)) we export to Israel directly is the base/minimum amount of assistance.



Also not counted in the figure above are, for example, direct investment in Israeli aerospace, /military/tech sector like with AWZ Ventures (Harper’s venture capital initiative). So, in addition to exports of conventional weapons/equipment, the demand should also include a full audit of Canadian FDI in military technology (including Israeli security tech contracts in Canada). Currently, Canadian civilian and military FDI data is not disaggregated sufficiently to allow us to get a clear picture.

- Also not accounted for in the GOC report or the ~\$21 million figure is: R&D cooperation, some of which is dual use (civilian/military), directly military, or involves the settlements in the West Bank, as well as the assistance provided under

the Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership that commits Canada to bilateral cooperation on military, police, security, intelligence, etc.

- It’s also worth noting that the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) has no provisions relating to the treatment of Palestinians or settlements.



Our Demands

1. **Impose an arms embargo on Israel.** This includes canceling existing contracts and revoking existing export licenses, and not issuing new contracts or export licenses.
2. **Undertake and make public a full audit of Canadian foreign direct investment (FDI) in military technology** (including Israeli security tech contracts in Canada).

The argument underlying these demands is that providing export licenses and permits violates Canada's commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), internal EDC and GAC policies, and commitments under IHL and the Genocide Convention.

Useful Questions to Ask of MPs and Other Government Representatives This Week

We suggest that you transparently and cordially record the conversations with your MPs, their staffers, or other government representatives, whether by using an audio recording app or by taking detailed notes. This helps document their positions and commitments, putting them on the public record and holding them accountable for the accuracy of their statements. We would love it if you shared these notes or recordings with us at: canada@worldbeyondwar.org.

1. It's not just a question of whether Canada has sent shipments of missiles to Israel in the past 10 weeks. Canada has for years been



arming Israel despite it being an apartheid state, and those arms are now being used in Gaza. Will Canada now impose an arms embargo until Israel stops committing the crime of apartheid?

2. Please clarify the meaning of Minister Blair's assurance "*that Canada is not providing arms or any military support to Israel. This includes no weapons and no ammunition.*"

a) Is he referring only to military aid provided by the Canadian Armed Forces? If yes, is this a matter of government policy related to Israel's assault on Gaza?

b) Does he mean that the hundreds of existing military export permits to Israel have been revoked since October 7?

If yes to this latter option, will the government announce this publicly? (When? Why not?)

If not, are there plans to cancel them? (If yes, when will those plans be implemented? OR If no, how can Minister Blair's statement be?)

c) Does he mean something entirely different? Can you explain in detail what?

3. The Canadian government is exceptionally un-transparent about those export permits—what products exactly they're for, what companies they're given to ("the applicant"), which companies or government entities receive the exports ("the consignees"). Yet you expect your constituents to accept your statement that Canada is not arming Israel. Can you provide us with a detailed, transparent list of export permits to Israel.



in 2021, 2022, and 2023 (as soon as available), including information about what products those permits allow to be exported, and by and to which companies or government entities (or in other words by which applicant to which assignee)?

4. Can you also provide us with a list of all the export permits to Israel that Canada has revoked?

5. Will the government commit to not issuing any new permits for export of military goods to Israel in 2024?

6. How does the Government of Canada track which components exported to the US (eg. as part of the F-35 program) or other third countries end up in weapons sold to Israel?

a) If the government doesn't, why not?

b) If you do, could you provide a list of those components, the company that manufactures them, and the company and third country to which they are exported?

c) If this latter is the case, how can you say Canada is not selling arms to Israel if that's the case?

Canada Can Implement an Arms Embargo: It's Done So in the Past

It is worth contrasting what we understand to be Canada's policy of continuing to approve military goods exports to Israel with its policy of canceling and stopping military goods exports to Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, as well as to Turkiye after evidence surfaced that Canadian tech was being used in Nagorno-Karabakh:



1. From 2022 Exports of Military Goods: **Policy reviews - controlled exports to Russia**

*On February 24, 2022, in response to Russia's illegal, unprovoked, and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine, **Canada stopped the issuance of all new permits for the export and brokering of any controlled goods and technology to Russia. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also announced that valid permits for the export or brokering of items to Russia had been cancelled.** Only export permit applications destined to Russia that are related to specific medical and humanitarian end-uses may be considered for exception. These measures were announced through Notice*

to Exporters and Brokers No. 1071 regarding Export and Brokering of items listed on the Export Control List and the Brokering Control List to Russia.

In addition to export controls, Canada also imposed sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. These include a dealings ban on listed individuals and entities, as well as prohibitions on the import and export of specified goods and technologies, including luxury goods, goods on the Restricted Goods and Technologies List, and certain advanced technologies and goods that could be used in the production and manufacturing of weapons. More information on Canada's sanctions is available on the Canadian Sanctions website.



1. From 2021 Exports of Military Goods: Policy Reviews: Controlled Exports to Turkey.

On April 12, 2021, Global Affairs Canada published the findings of a review it conducted, in consultation with the Department of National Defence, of all suspended and valid export permits and pending export permit applications for military goods and technology destined to Turkey. Following the review, 29 export permits to Turkey that had been suspended in the fall of 2020 were cancelled. As of December 31, 2021, the Notice to Exporters No. 992 regarding Exports of items listed on the Export Control List to Turkey remained in effect, with a presumptive denial policy in place for Group 2 (military) exports to Turkey.

The review mentioned above found credible evidence that Canadian technology (WESCAM sensors used in the Bayraktar TB2 UAVs) exported to Turkey was used in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as in Libya and Syria. The decision followed the publication of a report on the matter, "Killer Optics," by Project Ploughshares.



Resources

(October 26, 2023) Amnesty International [has called for an arms embargo on Israel \(and all parties to the conflict\)](#).

(Nov 6, 2023) [Human Rights Watch Calls for an Arms Embargo](#).

More from HRW on [the need for an arms embargo](#).

(December 14, 2023) [Fanning the Flames: The grave risk of Canada's arms exports to Israel](#), Kelsey Gallagher and Project Ploughshares.

(November 16, 2023) [Gaza: UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people](#).

(October 13, 2023) [A Textbook Case of Genocide](#), [Raz Segal](#), Jewish Currents.

Credits & Contact Information

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