

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Mass picket of TTM Technologies

ABOUT TTM TECHNOLOGIES

TTM Technologies is a US-headquartered company traded on the NASDAQ, and bills itself as one of the top five global manufacturers of printed circuit boards (PCBs) as well as a leading producer of “engineered systems, radio frequency (“RF”) components and RF microwave/microelectronic assemblies.”

TTM Technologies acquired Viasystems Group in June 2015. In 2018, its subsidiary Viasystems Toronto, now TTM Technologies Toronto, applied for licenses to export bare printed circuit boards to various branches of the Israeli military and surveillance technology giant Elbit Systems, as well as to an Elbit intermediary in Israel, Artem Technologies Ltd. The circuit boards were destined to be used in displays for F-15 fighter jets, communications computers for F-16 fighter jets, and in the power distribution system of Elbit’s Lizard laser guidance kits which turn general purpose bombs into precision strike munitions. The circuit boards were also slated for use in rocket, radio communications and thermal imaging systems. Elbit provides up to 85 percent of the land-based equipment procured by the Israeli military and about 85 percent of its drones.

This rare snapshot of a company’s export license applications is provided by a set of partially redacted records included in a 2020-2021 study by Canada’s Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE) and analyzed by Project Ploughshares in its December 2023 report about Canada’s arms exports to Israel. According to the Ploughshares analysis, “As there is no record of Canadian officials’ denying arms export permits to Israel, it is highly likely that these proposed transfers were authorized and later occurred.”

On a global scale, TTM Technologies supplies some of the world’s biggest weapons manufacturers. According to a February 2024 slide deck, TTM Technologies supports Lockheed Martin’s F-35 program and lists global arms manufactures L3 Harris, Raytheon, Boeing and Northrop Grumman as clients.

Like F-15s and F-16s, the F-35 fighter jet is a mainstay of the Israeli Air Force’s fleet of war planes that has bombed Gaza relentlessly over the past four and a half months.

A PLAUSIBLE CASE FOR GENOCIDE

Since October 7, Israel’s attack on Gaza has killed more than 29,400 Palestinians, injured more than 69,400, and destroyed much of the territory’s homes and civilian infrastructure. Now Israel is preparing for a ground invasion in Rafah, where some 1.5 million Palestinians have sought shelter, many having been displaced multiple times as Israeli attacks have shifted targets. Many

are facing starvation, as Israel has tightened its siege on the territory and humanitarian organizations struggle to deliver vital aid.

Monday's mass picket marks one month to the day since the [International Court of Justice found](#) that South Africa made a plausible case that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Indeed, a large majority of the ICJ judges concluded that Palestinians in Gaza face a "real and imminent risk" of genocide. The court also ordered Israel to comply with six provisional measures to protect Palestinians in Gaza from genocidal violence. This ruling has real and urgent implications for Canada, which as a party to the genocide convention, has an obligation to prevent genocide as soon as it is aware that there's a risk it is being perpetrated. The ICJ's ruling has made Canada's obligations crystal clear. An obvious and immediate step that Canada must take to fulfill its obligation under international law is to impose an arms embargo on Israel and stop permitting the sale or transfer of weapons and components to Israel. It should also halt all sales and transfers of weapons and components made in Canada to U.S. or other international companies for inclusion in weapons systems destined for Israel.

On Friday February 23 UN Experts released an emergency [statement](#) entitled "Arms exports to Israel must stop immediately" that highlighted Canada's complicity and arms trade with Israel. It noted that "state officials involved in arms exports may be individually criminally liable for aiding and abetting any war crimes, crimes against humanity or acts of genocide" and that arms companies contributing to the production and transfer of arms to Israel and businesses investing in those companies also risk complicity in violations of international humanitarian law and international criminal law.

CANADA'S ROLE

In fact, Canada shows no signs of fulfilling its obligation under international law to prevent genocide. As reported by The Maple, in the first two months of the war on Gaza, [Canada authorized at least 28.5 million dollars worth of new export permits to Israel](#). According to that report, from October to December 2023, "The total value of the new permits authorized [...] exceeds the 30-year annual [record high](#) of \$26 million in Canadian military exports to Israel in 2021." The names of the companies applying for export permits and the Israeli entities to which they are exporting them are redacted in the files obtained by The Maple. Antiwar organization World BEYOND War has released [a map](#) listing dozens of companies across Canada believed to be involved in providing weapons and military technology to Israel.

The Arms Trade Treaty, to which Canada is a signatory, is enshrined in Canada's Export and Import Permits Act (EIPA), and governs Global Affairs Canada's issuance of export permits. The Arms Trade Treaty stresses the importance of respecting international humanitarian law, human rights, and regulating the global arms trade. Article 6.3 prohibits arms transfers by state parties if they know the arms could be used in genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva conventions, attacks directed against civilians, or other war crimes. There is ample evidence that arms are currently being used by Israel in precisely these ways.

WHAT IS 'HOT CARGO'?

'Hot cargo' is a term that comes from organized labour: "Traditionally "hot cargo" agreements were included in labor-management contracts at the insistence of unions. These clauses allowed the employees covered by the union-management contract to refuse to handle or work on the "hot goods" of those employers the union had declared as unfair."¹ For example, a typical 'hot cargo' clause might read, "Employees have the right to refuse to handle material which the company purchases from any supplier whose employees are on strike because of a labor dispute."

Unions have also used the term to extend political solidarity to other workers around the world. In Canada, unions have invoked "hot cargo" in response to calls for solidarity from international unions and workers in South Africa under Apartheid, in East Timor facing genocidal violence under Indonesian occupation, and against the U.S.-led war on and occupation of Iraq.

As Israel's latest attack on Gaza began in October, Palestinian trade unions issued a call to workers everywhere to halt the sale and funding of arms to Israel, and related military research. In response, and in light of Israel's genocidal violence in Gaza, Canadian workers are declaring that all arms for Israel, including weapons components, technology and "dual use" components and technology be deemed "hot cargo." In solidarity, we call on our colleagues to refuse to work on them, or handle or transport them.

The protest is being organized by Labour For Palestine, Labour Against the Arms Trade, and World BEYOND War, in response to [the call](#) by a coalition of more than 30 Palestinian unions and worker organizations to end all complicity and stop the flow of weapons to Israel. Together, we demand that Canada stop arming Israel, and an end to Israeli apartheid.

¹ "Hot Cargo: Rehandled and Revisited," Cindy Hudson and William B. Werther, Jr.