



[U.K. Suspends Arms Export Licenses to Israel Over International Law Violations](#)

Recently, on September 2nd, United Kingdom (U.K.) Foreign Secretary David Lammy announced that the country would be issuing a partial suspension of arms export licenses to Israel. This would consist of 30 of the estimated 350 total licenses being provided. The decision comes in light of growing evidence of the equipment being used to commit flagrant violations of international law, and after a two-month long investigation of the conditions in Gaza, begun by Lammy when he took office back in July. Through this, the U.K. government has since deemed that there is a “clear risk” that some of the items could be used to engage in the aforementioned human rights abuses and breaches of international law. According to U.K. government sources, the license suspension includes an array of items that have seen usage in the ongoing Gaza War, such as fighter aircrafts, helicopters, and drones, as well as equipment that facilitates ground targeting. The remaining items that have not been suspended consist of ones not utilized in the conflict, like training aircraft and naval equipment, though the full list of other items has not been disclosed. In announcing the move, Lammy stated that the U.K. would not include suspension from the multinational F-35 program, citing concerns that doing so might negatively impact international peace and security.

The United Kingdom’s decision comes as opposition to the supply of arms to Israel has had increasing support, particularly among various countries in Europe and North America. This has led numerous nations to reduce or halt the supplying of arms to Israel, including Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, with an indication that more could follow suit in the coming months. Despite this trend and growing concern regarding Israel’s use of weapons to commit egregious human rights and international law violations, the U.S. government continues to provide arms to Israel and has not indicated that this will be reduced or halted in the near future. Many Americans have increasingly voiced opposition to the supplying of arms to Israel, yet the flow of weapons has persisted. With evidence continuing to mount implicating Israel’s human rights violations, a host of government officials, rights advocates, and others have outlined that the Leahy Law can and should be exercised against Israel in order to halt alarming arms transfers to the country. In spite of this, Israel seems to remain a glaring and problematic exception to the law in the application of America’s foreign policy. Experts, including Former U.S. Senator Leahy (D-VT) himself, have suggested that there is sufficient evidence to apply the law against Israel and therefore support the notion, however the United States appears reluctant to do so.

All of the growing criticism regarding weapons sales which has prompted the United Kingdom’s recent move is also taking place amid the backdrop of a dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, one that continues to deteriorate and has drawn international concern. Over 250 humanitarian organizations have called for the cessation of arms transfers to the region since the beginning of this year, coinciding with strong advocacy and efforts aimed at instituting a ceasefire in Gaza. While some countries have been reducing arms transfers, ceasefire talks have continued to stagnate, suggesting that the prospect of reaching an agreement remain challenging in the coming weeks. The ongoing destructive conflict that is still occurring as a result has produced desperate humanitarian conditions that have raised red flags from both organizations and the general public over clear evidence of human rights abuses and breaches of international law. Many of these groups have cited concerns about the declining humanitarian situation in Gaza, including the destruction of homes and other infrastructure, the resulting displacement of millions of civilians, the recent outbreak of polio in the region, and the famine-like conditions that may worsen as

food and water become even more scarce. Thus, humanitarian organizations have pointed out that the reduction of arms to the region and a lasting ceasefire would allow for much-needed humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts to take place in order to help alleviate the troubling crisis.