



Ending weapons sales to Israel

June 2024

We have previously issued letter-writing actions for you to write to the Australian Government to support Israelis and Palestinians who yearn for a just and lasting peace with an end to the murders, extrajudicial executions and acts of terrorism. In April 2024, we requested you write to the Australian Government to urge they follow the lead of other governments and place sanctions on Israeli settlers and members of the security forces responsible for murders, extrajudicial executions and other serious crimes against Palestinians where the Israeli criminal justice system has failed to deal with such cases fairly and transparently.

The following action seeks to urge that the Australian Government prohibit the sale of all weapons and ammunition to Israel, given the significant risk that such weapons might be used to murder or intimidate Palestinian civilians.

Israeli settler violence

The Israeli daily newspaper *Haaretz* reported that in March 2024, there had been 147 attacks by Israeli Jewish settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank. There had been 145 reported attacks in February 2024. Attacks were even carried out on the Shabbat. The report noted that settlers having access to firearms, such as rifles, allows them to freely attack Palestinians and keep those that would intervene at bay. The settlers have also been stealing flocks of sheep and goats owned by Palestinians in what appears to be an attempt to drive the Palestinians from the West Bank.

Armed far-right-wing Israeli Jewish extremists and settlers, mostly connected to the Lo Nishkach religious movement and the Tzav 9 group, have recently been mounting attacks on aid convoys taking humanitarian assistance to starving Palestinians in Gaza. In mid-May, right-wing Jewish extremists attacked and burned two trucks carrying aid at the Tarqumiyah border crossing near Hebron in the West Bank. An Israeli security official told *Haaretz that Israeli police officers tip off the extremists on the routes the aid trucks will take*. Two left-wing Jewish activists who support sending humanitarian aid to Gaza were attacked by the extremists and were left bruised. Israeli police present did not intervene to stop the attack.

In a separate attack, far right-wing extremists wounded a Palestinian truck driver by throwing a stone into his head. The attackers unloaded two trucks near the Givat Asaf settlement, deflated the tyres and set the trucks on fire. The trucks in question were not carrying aid or heading to Gaza. Israeli soldiers present did nothing to stop the attack, and when Israeli police arrived, they did not arrest any of the attackers.

The Israeli Minister in charge of the police, Kahanist Itamar Ben-Gvir, is opposed to providing humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza, which emboldens the right-wing extremists in their attacks.

Are Australian businesses selling weapons to Israel?

In February 2024, the Minister for Defence Industry, Pat Conroy, told the ABC Australia was not exporting military weapons to Israel. The Department of Defence has told the Senate that no lethal equipment is being exported to Israel through military sources.

However, data from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade shows that \$37.89 million of firearms and ammunition have been exported to Israel since 2007, with approximately \$10 million in the last five years.

The reconciliation of the Australian Government saying there are no military weapon exports to Israel and the trade data reporting millions of dollars of arms and ammunition being exported to Israel appears likely to mean the weapons and ammunition being exported are



non-military firearms from gun manufacturers. These firearms might include hunting rifles, shotguns and pistols.

In addition to arms and ammunition exports, Australian weapon manufacturers have provided other components to the Israeli military. Rosebank Engineering in Melbourne is the sole manufacturer of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighters' uplock actuator system, which allows the jet fighter to drop bombs. F-35 fighters have been used to drop bombs on Gaza.

Main sources of weapons for Israel

The two leading suppliers of military weapons to Israel are the US Government (69% of military weapon imports to Israel) and the German Government (30% of military weapon imports to Israel). In addition, the Israeli Government manufactures weapons of its own.

In March 2024, the Canadian Government promised to stop arms sales to Israel.

What You Can Do

Write polite and respectful letters to:

Senator The Hon. Penny Wong

Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

The Hon. Pat Conroy MP

Minister for Defence Industry
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Salutation: Dear Minister

Salutation: Dear Minister

Points to make in your letter:

- Welcome the Australian Government's actions to seek a just and lasting peace in the Israel – Gaza conflict and their commitment to recognise a Palestinian state as part of the solution.
- Express concern that Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade data show that Australia has exported nearly \$10 million in "arms and ammunition" to Israel in the last five years.
- Even if the weapons and ammunition in question are not military weapons and ammunition, express concern that firearms and ammunition from Australia could be sold to Israeli settlers in the West Bank and used to murder and terrorise Palestinian civilians.
- Urge that the Australian Government prohibit the sale of all weapons and ammunition to Israel as part of its efforts to contribute to encouraging peace between Israelis and Palestinians and opposing human rights abuses regardless of who perpetrates them.