

Bill to Stop UK Arms Trade with Israel: Britain Risks Charge of Accessory to War Crimes

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A Bill to stop the UK government selling arms to Israel has been introduced in the Commons by Labour MP Richard Burgon. The East Leeds MP is sponsoring the Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill. Currently Labour policy does not support the BDS movement, but during the recent conflict between Israel and Gaza, MPs have increasingly called for an arms embargo against Israel.

The move also comes amid growing protests against British companies that are involved with the Israeli manufacture of arms and military equipment such as Elbit Systems and Ferranti Technologies that produce mass intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance systems (C4ISR) including military drones (UAS), as used in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to control a population of more than 3 million civilians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem – part of an illegal settlement program that deliberately violates UN Security Council Resolution 2334 that was passed by Britain and 13 other UNSC member states in December 2016.

Britain’s involvement in helping Israel violates the demands of the UN Security Council, of which we ourselves are a permanent member, brings the entire United Nations and the Security Council into disrepute and ridicule.

Introducing the Bill with a video on Twitter, Mr Burgon said:

“Over the last five years the Conservative Government has approved hundreds of millions of pounds on arms sales to Israel. Those arms are used in the continued persecution of the Palestinian people as we’ve seen recently in Israel’s brutal war on Palestine. That has to stop. This Bill is all about stopping it.”

The Bill would amend the 2008 Export Control Order which includes a list of countries that the UK Government does not trade arms with. It would “prohibit the sale of arms to Israel and the purchase of arms from Israel”.

The Bill states:

"The UK Government must not authorise for sale, provide licences for sale, or otherwise directly or indirectly sell or authorise the sale of, any arms to Israel. "Any arms export licence that includes Israel as a destination for sale from the UK is revoked insofar as it applies to Israel. "No new arms export licence that includes Israel as a destination for sale from the UK may be created."

The Bill defines Israel as including *"Israeli military, police and border police"*. It has been cosponsored by Green MP Caroline Lucas, Plaid Cymru MP Liz Saville Roberts and SNP MP Tommy Sheppard. No date has yet been scheduled for a Second Reading.

Britain's bilateral arms trade with Israel that violates UNSCR demands for the mass repatriation of all illegal settlers back to Israel, is likely to implicate Britain in being accessory to war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank and/or crimes against humanity. The IDF soldiers continue today to routinely kill hundreds of unarmed men, women and children, every year, who protest at their borders for the return of their lands and homes violently stolen in 1948 by the armed gangs of LEHI and IZL Zionist terrorists who fought against the British and killed and slaughtered the civilian population of Palestine.

Unlike Germany, no reparations were ever offered or made for the extensive loss of life and land, and unlike Germany, Israel continues these crimes even today.

Much of the military equipment used by the IDF being made in Britain and exported with full government approval. The Bill is intended to remedy both this injustice and the shocking stain on British government morality and political judgement.

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