

CJPME: Canada's Stalling on Arms Embargo Violates Parliamentary Vote

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is calling on Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly to fully respect the intent of the Palestine motion adopted by Parliament on March 18 and impose a comprehensive embargo on all arms exports to Israel. While Joly has indicated that she is planning on enacting parts of the motion, she has said that any ban on arms exports will exclude trade under existing arms export permits, a massive loophole that contradicts the plain language understanding of the March 18 motion. CJPME reminds Joly that Parliament voted for a comprehensive end to arms transfers, and insists that she cancel all existing permits for weapons to Israel.

“Two weeks ago, Canada's Parliament voted to stop arms transfers to Israel, and we intend to hold the Trudeau government to this standard,” said Michael Bueckert, Vice President of CJPME. The March 18 motion, moved by the NDP and [heavily amended](#) by the Liberal government, ultimately called on Canada to “cease the further authorization and transfer of arms exports to Israel to ensure compliance with Canada's arms export regime.” “Despite Minister Joly's suggestions that existing permits will be excluded from this policy, a plain language reading of the motion makes clear that any further transfer of military goods to Israel would expressly violate the democratic will of Parliament,” added Bueckert.

The day after the non-binding vote, Minister Joly [claimed](#) that the ban on arms exports was “a real thing,” and [added](#) that the ban would continue “until we can ensure full compliance with our export regime.” Canada had already temporarily ‘[paused](#)’ new export approvals since January, but in theory, this would formalize the ban as a matter of policy. However, as of today, there is no indication that she [has notified exporters](#) about any change in policy.

Importantly, CJPME warns that Minister Joly has also tried to introduce loopholes that significantly reduce the policy's effectiveness, in particular by [saying](#) that export permits approved before January 8 will "remain in effect." CJPME points out that allowing arms exports under previously approved permits would be a significant violation of the plain language understanding of the [motion's intent](#), Canadian law, and the Arms Trade Treaty. In the three months following Oct. 7, Canada [approved](#) a record-breaking \$28.5M of arms exports to Israel. "Allowing these permits to stand would dramatically contradict the embargo that the democratic will of Parliament sought to enact. It is important that Canada immediately revoke these permits before the weapons reach Israel," added Bueckert.

Global Affairs Canada has [defended](#) this loophole by saying that "given the nature of the supply chain, suspending all open permits would have important implications for both Canada and its allies." First, CJPME argues that, if that were indeed a concern, the Liberals should have considered this before approving language that says something entirely different. Second, CJPME argues that such vulgar economic considerations are vastly outweighed by the grave implications that those exports pose to human rights in Gaza. "The Canadian government is explicitly putting the profits of Canadian companies ahead of the lives of Palestinians and the rule of law," said Bueckert.

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Featured image: Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly (The Canadian Press/Adrian Wyld)

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