

Arms Embargo Now: Canadian Civil Society Escalates Push for End to Canada-Israel Military Trade

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

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Canadian civil society organizations across multiple sectors are escalating their push to end Canada's trade in military and security technology with Israel. In a joint statement issued today for an "[Arms Embargo Now](#)," Palestinian associations, labour unions, human rights organizations, and community groups representing more than 2 million people across Canada are calling on the Canadian government to utilize new and powerful tools to definitively end military trade with Israel, including immediately implementing an official arms embargo using Canada's Special Economic Measures Act.

The organizations note that while Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly has verbally committed to pausing approvals of future arms export permits to Israel, this is insufficient to address the problem of Canada's complicity in Israel's military actions in Gaza. Nor does Canada's half-hearted approach to arms exports meet its legal obligations to protect Palestinians from genocide or other serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law.

For example, on April 29, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) officials confirmed to the [Senate Defence Committee](#) that GAC continues to allow further transfers of arms to Israel under already authorized export permits dating up to January 8, 2024. Therefore, the #ArmsEmbargoNow statement calls on the Foreign Affairs Minister to utilize the *Special Economic Measures Act* to enforce immediate sanction on the two-way military trade between Israel and Canada. Canada must prevent further weapons and military equipment from leaving or reaching Israel.

Canadian companies produce and export vital parts of the fighter jets, warships, drones, and attack helicopters that are decimating Gaza right now. At the same time as military exports to Israel continue, Canada continues to sign new contracts to purchase Israeli weaponry for the Canadian military, including missiles by Israeli state-owned weapons company Rafael advertised as battle-tested in Gaza. By continuing to arm, fund, and collaborate with the Israeli military, Canada is directly complicit in and profiting from the slaughter of over 14,000 Palestinian children in Gaza.

The #ArmsEmbargoNow [statement](#) for a comprehensive two-way arms embargo on Israel was initiated by organizations including the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), the Palestine Solidarity Network, World BEYOND War, Labour 4 Palestine, and Labour Against the Arms Trade. It has been endorsed by 26 organizations including unions such as the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Public Service Alliance of Canada, National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), Centre international de solidarité ouvrière, and Canadian Association of Professional Employees; and a wide range of human rights and advocacy organizations including the Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council (CMPAC), Indigenous Climate Action, the Council of Canadians, and many more.

“As a result of the persistent organizing of activists across the country, the Canadian government has been forced to pause some arms exports to Israel. However, Canada has refused to halt many aspects of its military trade, and therefore remains deeply complicit in Israel’s genocide. We refuse to let Canada get away with doing less than the bare minimum,” said Shatha Mahmoud of the Palestinian Youth Movement.

“Workers do not want to be complicit in Israel’s war crimes and possible genocide in Gaza. We recognize that ending Canadian arms exports to Israel may impact some workers in the arms and technology industries, which is why the government must work with their labour unions to plan for a just transition,” said Anne-Marie Roy, Labour for Palestine.

“The Canadian government needs to act decisively to save Palestinian lives and that begins with cutting off the Canada-Israel arms trade. Frankly ending the flow of weapons to and from Israel is the bare minimum Canada should be doing right now, and failure to take even this action makes a mockery of the government’s stated commitment to ending the violence in Gaza,” said Rachel Small, Canada Organizer with World BEYOND War.

“Minister Joly has promised Parliament to stop arms exports to Israel, but her actions so far have left many aspects of Canada-Israel military trade untouched. We cannot tolerate loopholes and half-measures during a genocide. Canada must impose sanctions on Israel using the Special Economic Measures Act to stop all dealings of military goods and technology with Israel, period,” said Alex Paterson, Senior Director, Parliamentary Affairs for CJPME.

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