

Israel to Sign Guns for Refugees Deal With African States

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Writing this blog as long as I have, I've seen some pretty low blows from the Israeli government. But this one ranks right up there. Those of you old enough remember Ronald Reagan's arms for hostages deal with the Iranians—now, Israel proposes an arms for refugees exchange. And it stinks to high heaven.

Ynet reports that the government is close to [inking a deal](#) with [three African states](#) (who are likely Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Uganda) who will take “tens of thousands” of ‘undesirable’ African refugees from Israel in return to Israeli weapons and training. Isn't that neat and tidy!? Israel gets rids of what MK Miri Regev called a “cancer in its midst” and contributes to the rising tide of mayhem and violence in countries like South Sudan and Eritrea, already beset by instability and civil war.

There was a time back in the 1960s when Israel actually offered aid that was constructive to newly independent African states. Of course, this aid wasn't done for purely altruistic reasons. Israel also wanted to cozy up to these states because they insulated it from the charge that Israel was oppressing similar types of states in the Middle East. Africa also offered a rich field for Israel's intelligence operations and satisfied some of its need for raw materials for its military-industrial complex.

This story should be linked to [another important one](#) reported yesterday. The Israeli government revealed there are 7,000 registered arms merchants plying Israeli weapons to precisely these sorts of unstable states, making Israel the sixth largest arms merchant in the world. What the government refused to do in response to a court case, was reveal the names of these merchants of death. It claimed that doing so would endanger them and expose them to potential terrorist attacks.

While this possibility is remote, it's much more likely that these arms dealers would be exposed to the shame and obloquy of the world community. And they should have to face such exposure. Israel and the nations where they ply their trade have the right to know who these people are. While the U.S. goes after the Victor Bout's of the world, it does little or nothing to reduce the proliferation of Israel's stable of sophisticated, lethal weaponry. These 7,000 go scott free because Israel is an ally, which Russia isn't.

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