

Spain Denounces “Indiscriminate Massacres” in Gaza, Imports and Exports Israeli Weapons to Ukraine

By [Ahmed Adel](#)

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Spain will acquire combat-tested Israeli military material worth €207 million at a time when the Iberian country also promised to recognise a Palestinian state and cut military exports to Israel. Decisionmakers in Madrid justify cutting exports to Israel due to “massacres” against Palestinians, but at the same time, export weapons to Ukraine, contributing to the massacre of civilians in eastern Europe.

The Ministry of Defence of Spain, through the General Subdirectorate of Acquisitions of Weapons and Materials, has initiated the purchase of Israeli-made weapons by awarding a contract to Rafael Advanced Defence Systems, one of the three largest military-industrial companies in Israel, to equip the Air Force’s Eurofighter Litening V fleet. In the award announcement, Rafael was claimed to be “the only one technically qualified to develop the project from a technical point of view” since it included the use of laser-guided precision munitions.

It also happens that the Litening V laser pods by Rafael have been used for months in Israel’s bombing campaign of Gaza, which has caused more than 31,000 deaths to date. Like almost all the war material that Israel usually exports, the Litening V laser pods are weapon support equipment whose manufacturers boast of their “combat proven” status due to their effectiveness against the Palestinians.

Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister José Manuel Albares announced on more than one occasion

the “total embargo” on the export of weapons to Israel. The contract awarded to Rafael obviously concerns an import and not an export, and, in this manner, Spain’s virtue signals against Israel whilst still benefitting from its military-industrial complex.

However, according to a [study](#) by the Delàs Center for Peace Studies, Israeli weapons imports carry a greater severity than military exports to Tel Aviv. In effect, the purchase of military material from Israel strengthens the country’s military and security model and, more importantly, contributes to subduing the Palestinians, which Israel makes economically viable with the sale of its combat-tested military products.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez says he is going to recognise Palestine as an independent State and that he considers what Israel is committing in the Gaza Strip “an indiscriminate massacre,” but then he continues to buy weapons from Israel. Therefore, it is not feasible to grant any type of credibility to the statements of the members of the Spanish government.

Last November, Sánchez vowed to prioritise the recognition of Palestinian statehood as its main foreign policy priority. However, when speaking after a summit in Brussels on March 22, he suggested to reporters that Spain would coordinate with other EU countries instead of unilaterally making the decision to recognise Palestinian statehood.

“We want to take this step united. It’s a decisive step in order to lay the foundations of a lasting peace,” he said in an evident U-turn, adding that the EU should “carefully calibrate” the right moment to take the step.

At the same time, before the Congressional Defence Commission, the Secretary of State for Commerce reported on the list of shipments of military material to Ukraine between March 2022 and February 2024. The amount supplied is equivalent to €190 million. These are mainly drones, grenade launchers, anti-tank mines, artillery ammunition, anti-aircraft and anti-ship missiles, tracked vehicles, night vision equipment, and 10 Leopard 2A4 tanks.

But this list does not take into account a new batch of Leopard 2A4 battle tanks since the Interministerial Board for Trade and Control of Defence Material and Dual-Use Technologies (JIMDDU) authorised the shipment of [another 19](#) of these armoured vehicles to Kiev once they are repaired and conditioned at the facilities of the Santa Bárbara Sistemas factory in the province of Seville.

Ten of the 19 tanks have already been transferred from the Army base in Casetas near Zaragoza, where they were stored. According to military sources cited by El Heraldo de Aragón, the plan is to send them to Ukraine at the end of June. To this end, the parts and spare parts necessary for its reconstruction must first be found, and when the entire process is completed, Spain will have sent a total of 29 Leopard tanks to Ukraine.

Nonetheless, shipping will be complicated since these vehicles are in even worse condition than the dozen reconditioned Leopards already shipped in 2023. Spain is sending such poor-conditioned vehicles to Kiev to increase its rearmament because the old stock must be disposed of before buying new weapons and equipment.

In this context, Spain justifies not exporting weapons to Israel because of the “indiscriminate massacre” of Palestinians but exports weapons to Ukraine, which contributes to the massacre of people in Ukraine and Russia’s newly liberated territories. Compounding the

contradiction is then the fact that Spain imports military equipment from Israel while refusing to export to the Jewish state and promising to recognise a Palestinian state.

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Ahmed Adel is a Cairo-based geopolitics and political economy researcher. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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