



UK Mission
Geneva

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
ARMS TRADE TREATY**

WORKING GROUP ON EFFECTIVE TREATY IMPLEMENTATION (WGETI)

**STATEMENT ON THE IMPACT OF ARMS TRANSFERS ON THE
CONFLICT IN GAZA**

21 February 2024

While the UK support Israel's legitimate right to defend itself and take action against terrorism, within the bounds of International Humanitarian Law, we are deeply concerned regarding the ongoing conflict in Gaza. We continue to call for International Humanitarian Law to be respected and civilians to be protected.

The UK operates a robust and comprehensive arms export control regime. These export controls protect global security and reflect a range of international legal obligations and commitments including the ATT and those resulting from United Nations arms embargoes or trade sanctions. We examine every application rigorously on a case-by-case basis against the UK's Strategic Export Licensing Criteria.

We carefully review Israel's capability and commitment to IHL. On concluding a review of extant licences to Israel on 18 December 2023, the UK's Business and Trade Secretary decided not to suspend licencing, but to keep licences under continuing, careful review, in view of the current hostilities in Gaza.

UK defence exports to Israel represent a small proportion of UK arms exports, amounting to £42 million across 114 standard individual export licences in 2023. We can and do respond quickly and flexibly to changing or fluid international situations and are able to review licences and suspend, amend or revoke as necessary when circumstances require. The Foreign Secretary has stated, in relation to the conflict in Gaza, that "if circumstances change and we reach a different view, we will advise [and act] accordingly".

As the ICJ case has been mentioned, let me recall that we have stated that we have considerable concerns about this case, which is not helpful in the goal of achieving a sustainable ceasefire. Nevertheless, we respect the role and independence of the ICJ. Its ruling is binding on Israel.