



Women in Black London deplore the UK's continued role in the global arms trade. Last year arms sales by the top 100 countries reached \$US679 billion. The UK ranked as 7th largest arms exporter with seven British companies, including Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems and Rolls Royce, in this top 100. We are likely to see a new arms race with the NATO endorsed national defence spending for member states of 5% of gross domestic product (GDP).

To secure this 'business', the government creates special trade delegations to promote our own 'battlefield tested' weapons. The hosting of 'arms fairs' is another strategy. Last September the UK hosted one of the largest arms fairs in the world, This February the Specialist Defence & Security Convention UK (SDSC-UK) will be held at the NEC Birmingham. The organisers describe the event as a forum for the military, law enforcement and security agencies to meet with leading defence and security technology-led and innovative businesses

Israeli and international weapons manufacturers have developed increasingly effective systems to drive Palestinians off their land. By collaborating and competing, they have refined technologies that enable Israel to intensify oppression, repression and destruction.

Francesca Albanese, Report to Human Rights Council, July 2025

We mourn the loss of life and the destruction of homes, schools and hospitals that are caused by the use of these weapons. We refuse to see war being normalised as part of an economy that profits from war. We urge our government to resolve conflicts by diplomatic and cooperative means, rather than promoting an industry that fuels wars through this continued trade in death.

Where are these weapons used?

- The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) report that several components for the US F-35 stealth combat aircraft, used in bombing raids over Gaza, are made in the UK and since 2016 are worth £336 million. The government is considering unblocking arms licences to Israel.
- Since the start of the Russian Ukraine war, the UK continues to be a major supplier of arms and military equipment to Ukraine. Tragically this war has created a massive surge in global arms sales and is likely to continue for many years.
- British-made military equipment, sold to the UAE, is being used by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for massacres, mass displacement, and starvation in Sudan.



What you can do

Share this leaflet with others: Scan the QR code and forward to others. Share our FB posts.

Find out more: Excellent resources on global arms transfers here. <https://www.sipri.org/>

Support the work of CAAT: <https://caat.org.uk/> and join their campaigns.

Write to your MP expressing your concerns about the UKs arms trade and especially the renewal of trade with Israel. Challenge the promotion of arms sales through fairs and exhibitions.

<https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

Women in Black hold vigils every Wednesday between 6-7 pm at the Edith Cavell Statue, St. Martin's Place, London WC2, opposite the National Portrait Gallery. Our vigils are silent, women-only and if possible, we wear black. We welcome all women who support our call for an end to militarism and war.

Contact us: FB @womeninblack.london <http://london.womeninblack.org/> February 2026

Donations for leaflets most welcome