**The Issue of International Arms Transfers in Supporting the Genocide in Gaza**

**Overview:**

International arms transfers have played a huge role in prolonging the genocide in Gaza, since the beginning of the war in Gaza these arms transfers have caused it to take a detour to the worse. The ready availability of weapons and ammunition leads to human suffering, political repression, crime and terror among civilian populations. Irresponsible arms transfers can destabilize an entire region, enable violations of arms embargoes and contribute to human rights abuses. Investment is discouraged, and development disrupted in countries experiencing high levels of violence. Countries affected by pervasive crime have the most difficulty attaining internationally agreed development goals.

**How did the arms transfers affect the Genocide?**

Arms transfers have increased the military capacity of both sides causing the confrontations to last for a longer time and be more brutal. Moreover, the increased possession of weapons has made a ceasefire decision harder to achieve since both sides feel that they have the ability to fight back. In addition to that, arms transfers have made more advanced weapons available to both sides, giving them the ability to launch more aggressive and destructive attacks.

**Consequences of arms transfers.**

As arms transfers mean that both sides are able to possess a larger amount of weaponry, more attacks can be launched and on a larger scale causing a much larger number of civilian casualties. Adding to that, these larger attacks cause much more damage to the infrastructure depriving many civilians from basic needs such as education and healthcare. This continued access to weapons slow down the negotiations for a ceasefire since both sides feel that they have the power to continue on with the war. Regional destabilization is another negative effect that the elongation of this Genocide has caused, since nearby countries such as Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon can be impacted, meaning that these arms transfers can contribute to instability in the Middle East.

**Key actors:**

Hamas’ Supporters:

* Iran
* Hezbollah

Israel’s Allies:

* USA
* Some EU countries

**The role of the US in the genocide**

After Israel began the war on Gaza on October 7, following an attack by Hamas that killed more than 1,100 people in southern Israel, the Biden administration sent a request to Congress to approve a $14bn foreign aid package for Israel, the bulk of which would be military assistance.

The US government also twice bypassed Congress to provide thousands of artillery shells to the country as it continued to bombard Gaza.

Yet, despite reports and Investigations that showed US weapons were used in Israeli bombings that killed Palestinian civilians in Gaza, attempts to pressure Washington to end the transfers have failed.

**The role of the UK in the genocide**

The UK has licensed more than 474 million pounds ($602m) worth of military exports to Israel since 2015, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW), and it “provides approximately 15% of the components in the F-35 stealth bomber aircraft currently being used in Gaza”.

**Some statements from the UN press.**

‘Any transfer of weapons or ammunition to Israel that would be used in Gaza is likely to violate international humanitarian law’. “All States must ‘ensure respect’ for international humanitarian law by parties to an armed conflict, as required by 1949 Geneva Conventions and customary international law,” the experts said. “States must accordingly refrain from transferring any weapon or ammunition – or parts for them – if it is expected, given the facts or past patterns of behavior, that they would be used to violate international law.” Such transfers are prohibited even if the exporting State does not intend the arms to be used in violation of the law – or does not know with certainty that they would be used in such a way – as long as there is a clear risk,” “there are many indications that Israel has violated the humanitarian law of war in a not insignificant number of cases”.

**Facts about the genocide**

The Dutch court pointed to the extensive civilian casualties, including thousands of children; the destruction of 60% of civilian homes and extensive damage to hospitals, water and food supplies, schools and religious buildings; widespread severe hunger; and the displacement of 85% of Palestinians in Gaza. It also highlighted evidence of the prolific use of imprecise “dumb bombs”; deliberate, disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks; failures to warn civilians of attacks; and incriminating statements by Israeli commanders and soldiers. Over 46,006 Palestinians have been killed and 109,378 injured in Gaza since 7 October 2023, the majority being women and children. The occupying Power has used illegal arms, including the deadliest explosive weapons, killing innocent people in some of the most densely populated areas of the world, particularly in Gaza. People in Gaza are trapped under constant bombardment, gun fire, and tank shelling. Israeli forces have repeatedly bombed places designated as “humanitarian zones,” including camps and informal settlements where displaced people have been living and humanitarian warehouses, for example, Israeli strikes hit a crowded area in nearby Al-Mawasi—an area Israeli forces advised people to go. Frequent attacks and the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas have killed and maimed thousands of people. There is no health system to speak of left in Gaza. Israel’s military has systematically dismantled hospital after hospital. Fewer than half of the hospitals in Gaza are operational while people’s medical needs are greater than ever.Further crushing the health system is the fact that supplies aren’t getting into the Strip, partly due to the continued closure of the Rafah crossing. Israel’s ongoing siege and the obstruction of aid efforts have denied essential supplies to civilians, including fuel, food, water, and medicines.

**Possible solutions:**

1. Sanctions on trade, finance, travel, technology or cooperation
2. Referral to the Security Council
3. Requesting the presence of UN peacekeepers
4. Proceedings at the International Court of Justice

**Conclusion:**

International arms transfers have played a huge role in this genocide, having direct and indirect effects in its prolonging. Although there is a lot of diplomatic pressuring to find a solution, the continued flow of weapons makes such a solution harder to reach.

**Some resources:**

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/27/icj-ruling-in-gaza-genocide-case-renews-calls-to-end-israel-arms-transfers>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/arms-exports-israel-must-stop-immediately-un-experts>

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/gadis3742.doc.htm>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/10/deaths-from-israeli-attacks-in-gaza-undercounted-by-41-percent-study-finds#:~:text=The%20toll%20was%20only%20for,the%20territory's%20Health%20Ministry%20says>.