

# Stop Wapenhandel

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## Dutch arms exports to Israel in 2023

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After long delays the Dutch government in April 2024 finally published an update of arms export licenses issued in 2023. This overview shows that it granted nine permits for arms exports to Israel, with a total value of €12.1 million. This doesn't include the export of spare parts for the F-35 fighter jet, which fell under a general license (since 2019), for which exported values for 2023 haven't been published yet. These exports were prohibited by the Court in February 2024.<sup>1</sup>

From the brief descriptions about the exports it is hard if not impossible to determine if these export licenses are still in line with the restrictive policy the Netherlands has had since 2002, when the government declared: "License applications are in principle rejected on the basis of criteria two (human rights), three (internal tensions) and four (tensions in the region) [of the European arms export criteria], as a result of the daily reality in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In particular if it concerns deliveries to the army or air force."<sup>2</sup> At least the permit for the export of 'parts, tools and technology for F-16 fighter aircraft', granted on 5 October, seems to cross this line though, as did the licenses for F35 parts. The F16 has been used extensively by the IDF in the attacks on Gaza.<sup>3</sup>

### Licenses for arms exports to Israel (2023)<sup>4</sup>

Date issued	Description	Value
31-01-2023	Thermal imaging camera's	€86,256
13-02-2023	Parts of grenade detonators and technology	€100,000
06-03-2023	Military technology	€875,000
07-03-2023	Parts for anti-aircraft radar systems	€343,869
01-05-2023	Vehicle vision systems	€16,381
22-05-2023	Parts for communication systems	€8,056,677
31-05-2023	Parts for sonar systems	€499,174
05-10-2023	Parts, tools and technology for F-16 fighter aircraft	€875,000
21-12-2023	Parts for warships	€1,214,000

Regarding arms exports to Israel since 7 October, Minister van Leeuwen (Foreign Trade; VVD) said in parliament in February 2024 that "these concerned parts for an Iron Dome anti-aircraft system<sup>5</sup>, so defensive, and for shock absorbers for containers on naval ships."<sup>6</sup>

1 <https://www.rechtspraak.nl/Organisatie-en-contact/Organisatie/Gerechtshoven/Gerechtshof-Den-Haag/Nieuws/Paginas/The-Netherlands-has-to-stop-the-export-of-F-35-fighter-jet-parts-to-Israel.aspx>

2 <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/dossier/kst-22054-71.html>

3 For example: <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-fighter-jets-israel-air-war-gaza-2024-1>

4 Compiled from: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/rapporten/2016/10/01/overzicht-uitvoer-militaire-goederen/cumulatief-ml-uitvoer-15042024.csv>

5 For which a license, with a value of €52,800 was issued on 31 January 2024.

6 <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/downloads/document?id=2024D08871>

A motion calling on the government to push for a general European arms embargo against Israel was rejected, with the support of only 11 (DENK, PvdD, SP) votes in favor.<sup>7</sup>

In 2023, one license application, for the export of parts for Ohskosh military LVSR (Logistic Vehicle System Replacement) trucks for the IDF via the company Koni North America, was denied in April, on the base of criterion 2 (human rights) of the EU Common Position on arms exports.<sup>8</sup>

While Israel is still not a major main destination of Dutch arms exports, their value has increased significantly under the current outgoing cabinet. This signals a more permissive attitude towards arms exports to Israel.

<b>Value of licenses for arms exports to Israel (2014-2023) – in mln.<sup>9</sup></b>											
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Individual permits	€1.19	€5.50	€0.59	€0.27	€0*.69	€0.30	€0.10	€0.55	€10.23	€12.07	€31.49
F35 parts	-	-	-	-	-	€0.11	€0.08	€0.60	€2.30	?	€3.09*
Total	€1.19	€5.50	€0.59	€0.27	€0.69	€0.41	€0.18	€1.15	€12.53	?	€34.58*

\* F35 parts: 2019-2022; total exports: 2014-2023 without value for F35 parts in 2023

The planned participation of The Netherlands in the Agreement on the Control of Arms Exports between France, Germany, and Spain, would result in the automatic issuance of a license for the export of arms components to these three countries, leaving to them the decision about granting a permit for the export of the assembled weapons with Dutch parts.<sup>10</sup> There is a high risk of a further increase of exports to Israel because of this, especially given the fact that Germany is Israel's second largest arms provider, after the United States.<sup>11</sup> On top of this, new national and EU level measures to support the arms industry are for a large part focused on increasing arms exports in general.<sup>12</sup>

The government also issued 38 permits for dual use exports to Israel in 2023, of which most are for civilian use. For two exports military use was specified: one in January, for integrated circuits (€60,000) and one in early October for information security software (€25,320).<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile an update of the notifications of arms transits via the Netherlands – in particular Schiphol airport and the port of Rotterdam – is still lacking. In Belgium, NGO Vredesactie showed that ships of the Israeli shipowner ZIM regularly transfer ammunition to Israel via the port of Antwerpen, without applying for the necessary transit permissions. These ships also sometimes dock in Rotterdam.<sup>14</sup>

7 <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/moties/detail?id=2024Z04189&did=2024D09742>

8 <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/rapporten/2019/03/04/historisch-overzicht-afgewezen-aanvragen-voor-militaire-goederen/historisch-overzicht-denials-publicatie-12042024.csv>

9 Jaarrapportages exportcontrolebeleid 2014-2022, maandrapportages uitvoer militaire goederen 2023; <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/exportcontrole-strategische-goederen/rapportages-dual-use-en-militaire-goederen>

10 <https://www.volkskrant.nl/columns-opinie/opinie-nederland-moet-de-grip-op-wapenexport-niet-verder-uit-handen-gegeven~bf76c977b/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

11 For example: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-arms-embargo-calls-data-shows-99-of-israeli-weapon-imports-are-from-us-germany/>

12 [https://stopwapenhandel.org/app/uploads/2023/12/ENAAAT-Report-WarLobby2WarEconomy\\_Sept2023-FINAL.pdf](https://stopwapenhandel.org/app/uploads/2023/12/ENAAAT-Report-WarLobby2WarEconomy_Sept2023-FINAL.pdf)

13 <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/rapporten/2016/10/01/overzicht-dual-use-vergunningen/cumulatief-overzicht-du-vergunningen-2004-maart-2024.csv>

14 <https://www.vredesactie.be/sites/default/files/2024-03/Vredesactie-IPIS-Belgische-wapenexport-naar-Israel.pdf>