

COLLATERAL PROFIT

Arms relations between Spain and Israel
since October 7, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ON SPANISH EXPORTS OF DEFENCE EQUIPMENT TO ISRAEL

- Between 7 October 2023 and 31 March 2025, Israel reported €5.3 million worth of imports from Spain under Code 93 ("arms and ammunition"), in five different sub-categories. This amount is almost five times higher than the figure recorded by Spain's DataComex under the same code.
- The value of imports that Israel reported receiving from Spain (under Code 93) and the value of exports that Spain reported transferring to Israel (across all categories of defence equipment) were similar in the first half of 2024, at around €1.25 million.
- Since 7 October 2023, the Spanish government claims that no new export licences for defence equipment have been granted. The official report states that in the first half of 2024, one licence was granted under Category 11 ("electronic equipment, spacecraft and components"), with a value of zero euros. No other authorisations for defence equipment or dual-use goods were recorded between January and June 2024.
- Between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024, no export licences for defence equipment or dual-use goods were denied. However, the Secretariat of State for Trade reported 47 denials of dual-use export applications to Israel in 2024—an all-time high since records began. This may indicate opportunistic behaviour by industry players in a context perceived as favourable to such exports.
- Official reports on defence exports make no mention of the lethality of the equipment sent to over 100 recipient countries, except in the case of Israel. The term is invoked exclusively in relation to this country.
- Available information suggests that the equipment exported by Nammo Palencia in November 2023 included 12,260 units of 30 mm x 173 calibre ammunition, 200 of which were explosive rounds. The recipient was Elbit Systems, Israel's largest defence company. The Spanish government has claimed that the shipment was for "testing and demonstration", but this is not stated in the official report.
- The 18 Santa Bárbara armoured vehicles exported to Israel (worth around €43 million), which were fitted with a command-and-control turret and 105 mm cannon by Elbit Systems before being delivered to the Philippines,

were ordered during the administration of Rodrigo Duterte—now detained by the International Criminal Court and accused of crimes against humanity. Between 2020 and 2024, Israel was the second largest exporter to the Philippines. Duterte openly admired the “Israeli brand” as battle-tested and unrestricted. Elbit Systems secured most of the contracts, and Santa Bárbara benefited from this privileged access. After 7 October 2023, materials related to this product (probably worth at least €908,200) were exported from Spain to Israel.

- Between 7 October 2023 and 28 February 2025, Spain imported more than €15 million worth of goods from Israel under Code 93 (“arms and ammunition”) and a further €21.6 million under Code 8710, bringing the total to €36.7 million. The year 2024 recorded the second highest figure of the last decade; the record was set in 2023, with more than half of this value imported in the last quarter. In other words, Spain has never imported more than after 7 October 2023. Nevertheless, codes 93 and 8710 represent only a small part of the total defence equipment “bought” from Israeli companies.

ON THE AWARD OF CONTRACTS TO ISRAELI COMPANIES AND BUSINESS COOPERATION

- Since 7 October 2023, Israeli defence and security companies, their subsidiaries or third-party companies linked to Israeli products have been awarded at least 46 contracts by Spanish institutions, with a total value of more than €1,044 billion. The bulk of the value of these contracts is related with the companies Elbit Systems and Rafael.
- While some of these contracts are for maintenance and/or upgrades of previously acquired products, others are new contracts that may create future dependencies for ongoing maintenance and upgrades.
- The largest part of the economic value of the contracts awarded to Israeli companies also benefit the Spanish industry, and this is precisely what makes it easier for Israeli companies (or its products) to win such contracts.
- Examples of contracts involving Israeli-designed products developed by Spanish companies through technology transfer agreements include the production of the SILAM rocket launcher (from Elbit Systems, to be developed by Escribano E&M and Rheinmetall Expal), the Spike missile (from Rafael, to be manufactured by the same two companies together with Tecnobit and FMG) and the Litening V laser designators (also from Rafael, supplied in collaboration with Indra and Tecnobit).
- Industrial defence cooperation between Spain and Israel is extensive and goes beyond contracts awarded by Spanish institutions to Israeli companies. For example, the 8x8 “Dragón” vehicle—a “Spanish” product manufactured by Escribano M&E, Indra, Santa Bárbara Sistemas and Sapa Placencia—uses at least five components from three Israeli defence companies: Elbit, Rafael and Plasan.
- News reports related to the awarding of two contracts (by Spain's Guardia Civil, a national law enforcement agency, and its Ministry of Defence) to Israeli companies reported revocations that had not yet occurred. As of early April 2025, no administrative procedure had been initiated to allow this to happen.

ON THE TRANSIT AND TRANSSHIPMENT OF DEFENCE EQUIPMENT DESTINED FOR ISRAEL

- Between 2005 and 2023, Spain authorised 9,322 port calls by ships carrying defence equipment and denied 129. None of these denials concerned shipments destined for Israel. In 2024, at least three denials (or threats of denial) were issued for ships carrying military equipment to Israel, and the Spanish government declared that it would not authorise any further transits. However, whether authorised or not, port calls have continued to be frequent, through at least four main channels: ships using the Rota naval base; commercial vessels under the US Maritime Security Programme transshipping in Algeciras; commercial vessels operated by the Israeli company ZIM linking the US and Israel via port calls in Valencia and Barcelona; and ships from Asia calling at Spanish ports on their detour to avoid the threat of attacks in the Red Sea.
- The denial of port access in Algeciras to two Maersk ships carrying US military equipment bound for Israel triggered diplomatic tensions, threats of US sanctions against Spain (encouraged by Maersk itself as reported), and the use of Tangier as an alternative port. This allegedly led to pressure on workers and even threats to those who objected to the transport of arms to Israel.
- In addition to the reported cases of Zaragoza Airport being used for the air transit of military equipment destined for Israel, the Rota base has also been identified as a stopover point for flights from the US. These flights also stopped at bases such as Souda (Crete, Greece) or Akrotiri (Cyprus) before landing in Israel. In some cases, military equipment is even transported between the US and Israel on regular commercial airline flights.
- Vessels carrying JP-8 military aviation fuel destined for Israel have also transited or transshipped in Spanish ports. Although JP-8 is not officially classified as "defence equipment", it arguably should be.
- In 2024, various legal initiatives were launched concerning the defence equipment trade with Israel. These included two motions, two bills calling for an embargo, a legal petition to revoke all existing export licences to Israel, and a formal complaint.



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