AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF UK ARMS EXPORT IN ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT AND THE COMPLICIT IN WAR CRIMES

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas that took place in Gaza and the conflict emerged from unprecedented destruction from the Hamas militant group in Palestine. Although the Hamas group portray themselves as freedom fighters, but western and developed countries have tagged it a terrorist group responsible for initiating the recent dispute in the Middle East, especially in the State of Israel. However, this paper analyses the United Kingdom's possible involvement in the Israel-Hamas conflict and assesses how the country's weaponry exports have affected the Israel-Hamas conflict. The paper therefore provided insights on arms exports by the British government and how this equipment has enabled acts that contravene international humanitarian law and how weapons such as drones, tanks and ammunitions have been utilized in military operations in Gaza. Furthermore, the paper shows the UK's compliance with its duties to control arms exports and stop their use in war crimes and human right abuse. Using the military-industrial complex theory, the paper provides how the military and defense contractors benefit mutually from arms exportation and the aim is not to aid the nations in need of war tools to win the war rather what they stand to gain when arms are exported. In this study, secondary data was employed using textbook, published articles, newspapers and media outlet report. Drawing findings from the in-depth interview conducted, this paper

revealed that the UK are not the major exporters or arms to Israel in its recent conflict with Palestine due to several factors which includes condemnation from the public and economic decline. This paper recommended that the UK should conduct a thorough risk assessment to ensure that arms exports to Israel will not be used to violate international humanitarian law and Israel and Palestine conflict could be addressed by border controls and international peacekeeping forces. This paper therefore concluded that the conflict is fueled by external factors including arms exportation and the UK must re-examine their arms export policies.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The struggle between the Jews and Arabs has been in existence for more than a century which is believed to have been caused by the ownership of the Holy Land (Beyer, 2023). The prolonged and complex conflict has been extensively covered by the media for over six decades but it lacks the possibility for a resolution. In recent times, certain factors have set the stage for a pivotal moment in shaping the conflict's future and the broader region. Nonetheless, the tension looming between Palestine and Israel is unarguably one of the most protracted and contentious conflict in the Middle Eastern region (Beyer, 2023). In contemporary times, there has been various speculations of the UK being partly involved in the Israel-Hamas conflict and its arms sales to the Israelis. Despite being sanctioned by international actors over violations of international law and human rights, the UK has licensed arms worth over 547 million pounds to Israel since 2008 (Brooke-Holland, 2024). Oxfam (2024) reported that since 2015, the UK has licensed military exports worth at least £2.489 billion to Israel through 1,250 standard licenses but during the same timeframe, the UK approved 61 open licenses to Israel, which allows for unlimited value exports. The total worth of arms transfers to Israel is unknown because the UK does not announce information on open licenses. However, from what was reported, it is obvious the UK has facilitated mass killing in Palestine; not just that, the UK is responsible for aggravating the war and this decision made by the country has caused the rise of regional conflicts between some countries in the Middle East particularly Iran and Lebanon.

This major objective of this paper is to examine the consequences of the UK's arms export policy to Israel on the Israel-Hamas conflict. The study examined the war equipment exported from UK to Israel and it revealed that there is a significant impact on the escalation of the Israel-Hamas war due to the arms exported. The conflict is unarguably the most complex international issue with limited progress therefore, the study aims to contribute to the existing literature by giving insight on the implications of arms supply by the UK to Israel despite numerous efforts including calls from international organizations who urged the UK to suspend licenses and also accused the country of neglecting international humanitarian law (Aisedion, Osimen, & Ade-Ibijola ,2022).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Conflict

Conflict is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon involving perceived incompatibilities, disagreements or contradictions between two or more parties, often requiring creative and innovative approaches to resolution (LeBaron, 2022). Osimen (2017) asserts that situations when two individuals cannot agree on what one person does or does not want the other to do is called conflict. It is important to note that it is also a state where two or more persons have competing interests, values or goals, leading to a perceived incompatibility and at least one party attempts to pursue its interests at the expense of the other (Chukwudi et al, 2024).

Conrad (1991) indicated that encounters between independent individuals who believe their interests are contradictory, inconsistent or tense leads to conflict. Cobb (2022) postulates conflict as a relational phenomenon where two or more parties experience a breakdown in

communication, leading to a battle of dominance, recognition or resources. Conflict is a scenario where two or more people have different beliefs, values or goals, resulting to a struggle for power, resources of influence and potentially threatening their relationships or identities (Faure, 2023). Conflict simply expresses resentment, negative attitude, hostility, disagreement, rivalry and incompatibility which is often showcased in form of physical violence. Conflict in itself arises from a range of needs, aspirations or demand and the response towards a perceived conflict is what transforms it to either a competitive or destructive experience.

2.2 Concept of Arms

Arms are a wide array of armaments, military tools and equipment, structures and automobiles used specially for the purpose of war (Guilmartin, 2024). Notably, the term "arms" comes from the Latin word "arma" meaning "tools of war" or "weapons" which was passed into English from French in the 13th century (Vocabulary, 2024). From time immemorial, an important connection has occurred between military arms, the strategies of its employment and the mental factors that bind its users into units. Arms ranges from the military equipment, structures and vehicles used specifically for the purpose of warfare (Guilmartin, 2024). Also, arms in broader context describes weapons like rifles, artillery, ammunitions and explosives. The production of nuclear-powered weaponries and military technology is to equip forces in preparation for a conflict and global proliferation of weapons like machine gun, aircraft, warship, rocket-propelled grenades and other man-portable weapons has increased both the occurrence and intensity of contemporary conflict and has significantly frustrated every attempt and effort to restore peace (Osimen et al., 2022); (Larsen & Smith ,2024). When reviewing arms, it is pertinent to discuss arms proliferation, particularly the availability and distribution of small arms and light weapons (SALW) to conflict zones. Generally, arms incites violence and intensifies human suffering in conflict situations which ultimately has led to illegal proliferation and abuse of weapon. Illegal proliferation and abuse of arms has had great impact in the world which has caused wars and the result of these wars have led to psychological, physical and emotional impact on civilians.

The idea behind SALW was put in place as a result of the destabilizing outcome on societal development, economic growth, sustainable growth and human right (Osimen, et al, 2020). The scheme engages with experts and private bodies in order to promote cross-border connectivity and targeted research. However, the project was successfully funded and executed by the European's Union's Internal Security Fund – Police, under the call Ref. Ares (2019)6410895 – 16/10/2019 and under the Grant Agreement Number 878484 – CRAAFT – ISFP – 2018-AG-CT/ISFP-2018-AG-CT-TERFIN (Mehra et al., 2021).

2.3 An Historical Background of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

The dispute between Israel and Palestine has been considered as a delicate issue in the international community. The clash between Israel and Palestine is one of the most persistent and unmanageable conflict to beset the contemporary world order and as such, the connection between Israel and Palestine lacks a simple explanation or easy route for resolution. The British government in 1917 issued the Balfour Declaration, a public statement made at the time the World War 1 began, announcing its unwavering commitment for the establishment of a nationwide home for the Jewish population in Palestine which was under the then Ottoman region with a small Jewish minority population (Kramer, 2017). This announcement entailed a short letter from the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary, Authur Balfour to Lord Rothschild who was a leader of the British Jewish community. The letter dated November 2nd 1917 but the content of declaration was available in the press on 9 November 1917. The letter states;

> *Dear Lord Rothschild, I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the cabinet. His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object. It being understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in*

> *Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country. I shall be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation (Kramer, 2017)*

At the peak of World War 1, British and Australian armed forces have fought deep in Palestine against the Ottomans and took over Jerusalem. Since the Balfour Declaration initiated the step towards political Zionism which is attributed to Israel's legitimation by other nations, the declarations own legitimacy has been the subject of unending attacks (Kramer, 2017). However, the starting point of the conflict for a lot of people in the international field claim that the United Nations General Assembly of 1947, embraced the Resolution 181 popularly referred to as the Partition Plan which was aimed at separating the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states (Reuters, 2024). This enabled the creation of the State of Israel on the 14th of May 1948 ultimately birthing the first Arab-Israel War. The plan was to divide Palestine into Arab and Jewish states for international rule over Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Jewish rulers accepted the plan by enriching them with 56% of the land while Arabs were entitled to 43% (Reuters, 2024). Neither Palestine nor other neighboring Arab country agreed to the formation of a modern Israel and this led to series of violence between Jewish armed groups, with some of these groups which the British labeled as terrorist groups (The Guardian, 2023). The conflict escalated after World War 2 which eventually led to the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians and about 85% of the Arab people of the territory apprehended by Israel were never allowed to come back (Reuters, 2024). This holocaust became increasingly intractable and in February 1947, Britain declared its plan to dismiss the mandate and in May of the same year, Britain turned the situation over to the UN, which birthed the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) comprising representatives of Australia, Canada, Guatemala, Czechoslovakia, Iran, India, The Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Peru, Uruguay and Sweden (Khalidi, 1997; Oyewole et al, 2018). The endorsed Jewish territory under the UNSCOP covered around 56% of the territory of the British Mandate of Palestine. This territory was shared into three neighbouring regions: the eastern Galilee region comprising of cities like Safad, Tiberias, Baysan and the Sea of Galilee; a coastal area comprising about two-thirds of Palestine's coastline, inclusive of major cities like Haifa and Tel Aviv as well as the fertile lowland plains; some part of the Negev desert region, excluding Bir al-Sabi' and a strip along the boundaries of Egypt but with access to the Red Sea (Rogan & Shlaim, 2007). Out of the districts in Mandate Palestine, nine were allocated to the proposed Jewish land, only one of which had a Jewish majority population. The endorsed Jewish state as a whole had an Arab population approaching 47% constituting a significant minority (Rojan & Shlaim, 2007). The UN vote on the Partition Plan for Palestine was initially scheduled for November 26 1947, however supporters of the partition delayed the vote for three days to allow more time for intense lobbying and pressure tactics primarily by the United States and Zionist organizations in an effort to secure the required two-thirds majority. On November 29 1947, the partition plan was implemented with 33 votes in support, 13 against and 10 non-participant (Khalidi, 1997). The UN approval of a separation plan was met with general strikes, demonstrations and in some cases destructive riots in Arab areas of Palestine, particularly in Jerusalem. Emboldened by the UN pronouncement, Zionist military groups launched attacks on Arab rural and urban areas even before the well planned and organized movement of Plan Dalet commenced in the beginning of April 1948. Nonetheless, Arab settlers, volunteer forces and irregular troops defended their territory and retaliated with attacks on Zionist areas which escalated into a civil war phase of the 1947-1949 Palestine War. This period of intense fighting between Arab and Jewish forces in Mandatory Palestine ended with the declaration of the State of Israel on May 15, 1948 (Khalidi, 1997). By the time the war came to an end, Israel emerged as the victors leaving over 750,000 Palestinians injured, killed and homeless with the division of the territory into 3 parts: the State of Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Center for Preventive Action, 2024). The founding father of Israel, David Ben-Gurion declared Israel as a modern state a day before the arranged end of British rule, creating a protected and safe location for Jews escaping persecution and looking for a national homeland to which they cite deep ties dating to antiquity (Reuters, 2024). The creation of a modern Israel was immediately endorsed by the United States, United Kingdom, the Soviet Union (USSR) and other governments, fulfilling the Zionist vision of an intentionally accepted Jewish State.

2.4 An Overview of the UK's Arms Export Policy

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) was established in 1966 and it measures the capacity and quality of conventional arms using its own measurement unit called the Trend Indicator Value (TIV). This unit reflects the military capability of the weapons rather than their financial value which allows for a measure trends in arms transfer over time (Kirk-Wade, 2023). While the headquarters is located at Stockholm, Sweden, the UK was one of the seven states that co-authored the original UN resolution for the creation of Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2006 and it played a central role in supporting the negotiation and adoption of the ATT (Kirk-Wade, 2023). At the time ATT was created in 2015, the UK has approved over 9,000 unlimited export licenses for military good to 230 destinations and countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Kenya, Pakistan and China. Saudi Arabia has always been a major recipient of UK arms export as it recorded to have received arms worth over 1.1 billion pounds including missiles and other military equipment believed to have been used by Saudi forces in the conflict with Yemen (Kirk-Wade, 2023). From January 2015 to June 2020, the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) endorsed military tools supply to 58 out of 73 nations categorized as subject to such restrictions. These authorizations all together are over 4,800 worth £2.6 billion, with a majority valuable equipment like drones, aircrafts, helicopters and also small weapons including bombs, detonators and military equipment used to control crowd (AOAV, 2023). The UK has also approved the sales of arms to countries including major targets like Bahrain, Colombia, Egypt, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia while condemning human right violation seemed ironical as it explains a complex and seemingly conflicting stance of the UK administration (The Guardian, 2024). This has been a challenge in the UK as the country has faced balancing import and export interest, international relations strategies and human rights consideration in its arms export rules (AOAV, 2023).

In recent times, there has been slight adjustments to the UK's arms export criteria and the changes were announced by the Secretary of State in December 2021 for global trade aimed to ensure that the UK's arms supply policy aligns with its global responsibilities and commitments. Although, these criteria are being modified from time to time, with the last significant re-assessment in 2014 before it was re-accessed again in December 2021 which was partly influenced by the UK's withdrawal from the EU which saw the exit of references to the EU and the implementation of a new language and emphasis points in the criteria. It was however published and articulated on the 30th of November 2023 by the House of Commons Library (Brooke-Holland, 2023). The UK government implies that exportation of arms and export licenses are subject to review and can either be modified, adjourned, rejected or withdrew as circumstances require but the UK Business and Trade Secretary, Kemi Badenoch announced on the 18th of December 2023, that the UK will not suspend existing licenses or stop granting licenses, but certain decisions will undergo careful review (Agbebaku, et al, 2022; Brooke-Holland, 2023). The UK has issued over 108 new arms export licenses to Israel from October 7 2023 when the conflict began with the Hamas attack to the 31st of May 2024. Significantly, figures were released by the business department and a total of 345 licenses authorizing arms sales to Israel are currently ongoing including those issued before October 2021 (Hussain, 2024). According to CAAT (2023), the UK government has supplied 448 million pounds worth of ML22 licenses (military technology), 117 million pounds worth of ML10 licenses (aircraft, helicopters drones), 22 million pounds worth of ML4 licenses (grenades, bombs, missiles, countermeasures), 4.6 million pounds worth of ml6 licenses (armored vehicles, tanks), 1.9 million pounds worth of ML3 licenses (ammunition), 1.1 million worth of ML1 licenses (small arms) between May 2015 and August 2022. In recent times, the UK administration has denied claims of supplying lethal weapons or military tool other than providing medical materials to Israel. However, since the conflict broke out in late 2023, data for export licenses have not been made public, instead the then UK Deputy Prime Minister, Oliver Dowden has given reasons why arms exportation to Israel will not be suspended. On the 7th of April 2024, Dowden told BBC "the important thing is, is it legal, can we lawfully sell arms Israel? And yes, that is the case and on that basis that position will not change" (Hussain, 2024).

Organizations like Greenpeace UK, best known for its environmental campaigns has called on the UK to halt any further arms embargo as the bombing of Gaza is a human and environmental catastrophe and these attacks have left rivers of sewage leading too dirty and undrinkable water, contaminated land and toxic air. Greenpeace experts warn that the conflict will leave Gaza uninhabitable (Greenpeace, 2024). On the 11th of April 2024, over 260 humanitarian and human rights organizations

from different parts of the world demanded that all states should halt arms embargo to Israel and Palestine. These organizations initially began with 16 humanitarian organizations as at January 2024 when the zeal to ensure UK halts arms exportation became intense, the organizations grew to more than 275 made a unified pronouncement and a public call to all UN member states to stop fueling the disaster in Gaza and carry out its responsibilities to uphold global peace and security by curbing measures to suspend the supply of weapons to the Israeli government and Palestine respectively.

It is pertinent to understand that Brooke-Holland (2025) highlighted quite a number of reasons as to why the UK chose to equip Israel with arms. However, asides the historical bond shared between UK and Israel, these two countries in recent time has collaborated on military technologies and the UK has maintained strong strategic and security ties with Israel, therefore, supporting Israel's defense capabilities typically aligns with broader NATO and other western security interests. Suffice to note, arms trade is a lucrative business and it is a significant sector in the UK economy because in the Middle East, Israel is a major customer in the arms market, as a result the UK benefits financially from these exports, including components for advanced military systems like the F-35 (Brooke-Holland, 2025).

2.5 Nature of the Conflict between Israel and Hamas

There has been different episodes of the conflict between Israel and Hamas and the most recent can be analyzed by understanding the historical context which has been examined. It is no news that for over a decade, Israel and Hamas have had series of war over territorial boundaries which has now been termed intractable as the war has had no formal ending or no chance for peace making despite international bodies intervening in the conflict. Israel has brought Gaza to the edge of humanitarian devastation and for several decades, Israel has done incalculable damages to the economy of the Gaza strip. On November 11 2018, a brief but intense exchange of violence occurred between Israel and Hamas and it started after a botched Israeli convert operation in Gaza, leaving seven Palestinian soldiers and one Israeli soldier dead. The operation was executed in the Khan Yunis area of the southern Gaza strip and exchange of live bullets lasted for more than two days until a ceasefire mediation was reached by Egyptian government which failed as the violence continued for days (BBC, 2018; AFP/Gaza city 2018). The conflict had no hope of coming to an end and this prompted another protest on the 19th of November by Palestinians. At this point, it was a maritime protest in which some Palestinians used 20 boats while demonstrators gathered on the beach near Beit Lahia in Northern Gaza. In response, Israeli troops launched containers of tear gas and proceeded to fire live shots at protesters leaving 24 people wounded and an associated press camera man by name Rashed Rashid who was shot in his left ankle (Ma'an news, 2018). The protest did not stop neither did the attack and on Friday 23 November 2018, Palestinians protested near the fence demarcating the Gaza-Israeli border which resulted to 14 Palestinians being wounded by Israeli live ammunition (Ma'an News, 2018) However, it was reported that the response and demonstrations by Israeli troops was quieter than usual.

In recent times, there has been a latest episode of violence in the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly in Israel and Hamas, a city in Palestine. In the early hours of October 7 2023, Palestinian militant group, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, launched a surprise attack on Israel (Aljazeera, 2023). An estimate of 3000-5000 rockets were fired against the Israeli border towns and Tel Aviv which is 70km to the north of Gaza. According to Aljazeera (2023), the Hamas group with a combination of gunmen breached security barriers and a barrage of rockets fired from Gaza was launched at dawn during the Jewish holiday of Simchat and Torah. Hamas fighters and Palestinian gunmen breached the Gaza-Israeli territorial borders, attacking military bases and civilians in 21 communities including Nir Oz, Netiv Haasara, Be'eri, Kfar Aza and Alumim killing approximately 364 civilians and many wounded during the Nova Musical Festival in Israel (Aljazeera, 2023). Mohammed Deif, the head of the Qassam Brigades which is the military wing of Hamas announced the beginning of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and also notified that the first strike will target enemy positions, Ben Gurion Airport near Lod (formerly Lydda) and military fortifications will exceed 5,000 missiles and shells. Hamas launched 5,000 rockets in an initial barrage but Israel's military recorded 2,500 rockets fired killing over 1200 Israelis and foreigners and around 5,400 were injured (Aljazeera, 2023). In response, Israel launched a massive military campaign and has carried out large scale airstrike, naval bombardment and

ground attacks on Gaza which has killed over 42,877 civilians, injured many Palestinians and displaced more than 1.5 million Gaza residents. Israel's response to Hamas has led to the destruction of high-quality infrastructure, which ultimately has resulted to intense famine and power failure (Peer, 2023). From the 11th of October 2023, Gaza has been under electricity blackout leading to the use of fuel-run backup generators that are being used to keep critical infrastructure functional (Diakonia International Humanitarian Law, 2024).

Several catastrophic events took place beginning from the 11th of October 2023, exactly 4 days after Hamas launched its attack in Israel. According to a report by Gaza Ministry of Health and the Government Media Office in Gaza, a total of 3,195 children have been killed since October 7 which was characterized as more than the number killed in armed conflict globally across more than 20 countries and as at 11th of December, 7,729 children were reportedly killed in Gaza (Save the children, 2023). The war between Israel and Hamas will never be forgotten in a hurry as journalists who were to document the various events that took place also lost their lives in the course of their job. According to Committee to Project Journalist, nothing less than 29 journalists were brutally murdered between 7 and 27 October which marks the deadliest period for journalists covering conflict since Committee to Protect Journalist began tracking in 1992. (CPJ, 2023).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1 Military-Industrial Complex Theory

A key proponent in analyzing modern conflict is that of the military-industrial complex theory which was propounded by the former leader of the United States and the former General of the US army, Eisenhower D. Dwight. Eisenhower used the concept in his goodbye speech while addressing the nation on the 17th of January 1961. Dwight who was an ex-military republican leader of the US expressed his fears on the impact of the conjunction of an extreme military formation and a vast arms industry which he envisioned as a new experience in America. The military-industrial complex theory is a term generally used to address policy relationship between government, national armed forces and the industrial department that aids them. These relationships include political approval for research, development, production and support for the military training weapons, equipment and facilities within the national defense and security policy (Weber, 2024). This theory suggests that it is the wickedness of man and not humans in general that is responsible for conflict and war to undermine societal peace. It involves the circular flow of money within the complex, where money from leaders is being used to influence the media leading to the perpetuation of war and military spending (Heidi, 2023). This theory certifies that leaders are war mongers who stir up war by thrusting arms in their possession thereby initiating war.

3.0 Methodology

Research Design

This paper embraces the qualitative design to produce a broader knowledge of the research problem. This method makes use of interviews and data collection to identify patterns and correlations and it can be characterized as an appropriate approach as it gives room for a proper understanding of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. This research design is deemed fit for this work because it analyzes the relationship between the UK in terms of arms exportation to Israel and the impacts it has had in the cause of the war.

Population of the Study

The population of this paper is made up of relevant stakeholders, academic scholars and military experts in political affairs who are highly knowledgeable about the conflict and the policies made by UK on its arms export to Israel.

Sample Size

The sample size of this research is attained by adopting qualitative data using document analysis and conducting interviews with 10 key informants who have vast academic knowledge on the conflict. The justification for this sample size above is related to Saunders & Townsend (2018), who explained that a target population with a homogenous interest requires 3 to 12 interviewees, which is considered sufficient for the study.

Sampling Technique

This study adopted the purposive sampling and it is a type of non-probability sampling technique that selects participants based on their criteria, specific characteristics and how relevant they are to the research study. As defined by Creswell (2014), purposive sampling technique as a strategy in which a researcher selects participants based on detailed and specific features of characteristics, experiences or insights, to gain knowledge into the phenomenon being studied. In analyzing this paper, the purposive sampling technique is justifiable because it allows for a representative sample of different opinions and experiences related to the UK's policy on arms exportation in the conflict and it gives a concise and representative understanding of the stakeholders (NGOs, Israel, Hamas and Gaza civilians) involved.

Method of Data Collection

This study makes use of both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews from academic scholars, military experts and individuals from ministry of foreign affairs to gather insights and contributions related to the UK's arms export policy in the Israel-Hamas conflict. Additionally, secondary data was gathered from reputable sources including academic journals, government reports, media outlets reports on the Israel-Hamas conflict, published reports from international organizations and NGO's like UN and Amnesty International to offer a broad understanding on the impact of the policy and how it has aggravated the conflict.

Methods of Data Analysis

This research adopted a thematic analysis that seeks to examine the primary information that was gathered. This method helps to study and examine the responses, recognizing patterns from the responses which addresses important points identified in the research objective.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section entails the presentation and analysis of data of the interview respondents, who are all experts in the field of diplomacy and international relations. The data is also presented in line with the research objective and proposition with each backed up with understandings from secondary data and responses from key respondents.

4.1 Demographic Analysis of Participants

Table 4.1 Demographic Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Scholars of Political Science and International Relations at a Reputable University	4	40
2	Administrative Officers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3	30
3	Military Personnel at Dodan Barracks	3	30

Source: Author's Field Survey (2025).

4.2 Presentation of Data for Research Question

What are the consequences of UK's arms export policy to Israel?

To comprehensively address this research question, the respondents were asked questions designed to explain UK's policies on arms

exporting to Israel in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. A key respondent gave an extensive review on the implications surrounding arms exportation. He stated:

> *Most of the arms deal is between US and Israel but the exportation of weapons by UK to Israel is not so much and as such I doubt there are significant consequences but looking at the exportation of arms by US to Israel, of course there will be consequences, in fact it is obvious that the consequences are beginning to manifest. If you observe closely, you can tell it is mostly the western powers that supply Israel with weapons and the Palestinians are left to struggle for themselves, this move alone is giving room for more resentment on the part of the people of Palestine. Israelis are what I call the junior brother or will I say the last born of great western powers like the UK and US and because of the non-stop supply of sophisticated and advanced arms by these nations to Israel the violence is not ending any time soon. As a matter of fact, the cycle of violence will thwart every effort to promote peace.* ***(Interview with key informant/ Scholar in International Relations, 2025)***

On the other hand, another key informant was also of the opinion that the UK's arms export policy is mild and he stated that

> *There is no looming danger and if at all there would be consequences for their actions, something would have been done a long time ago. However, the only visible issue is the incessant deaths particularly in Palestine; but you cannot entirely blame Israel because the citizens of Israel were having a good time, a memorable celebration when they were attacked unprovoked by Hamas. Every country will defend its nation, you cannot beat me and expect me not to beat you back. Israel retaliated and this was with the help of military intelligence and weapons from UK, the only crime Israel has committed is the number of people they've massacred in Palestine. People die every blessed day in that nation and I think at this point Israel should just accept that they are the victors and stop the killings in Palestine.* ***(Interview with key informant, Scholar in International Relation, 2025).***

Similarly to what the second informant stated, a key informant responded by stating that

> *The signs are quite clear that if this war does not end nothing will still happen. Despite the whole Arab nations against the actions of Israel, the war has still not escalated into a regional war and if I am not mistaken the war is going to two years now. So, the way UK transports arms to Israel for them in the war does not have any form of implication.* ***(Interview with key informant/ Military Personnel, 2025)***

Notwithstanding, another key informant stated that

> *Well, you know Israel is surrounded by enemies in that region, so you won't even blame Israel for collecting guns, bombs and aircrafts from these big countries. If you ask me, I think there is no much consequences except for the humans that are suffering from the actions of both Israel government and Hamas.* ***(Interview with key informant/Military Personnel, 2025).***

While explaining the consequences of UK's arms export policy on Israel-Hamas conflict, another key informant who is an expert in international relations stated that

> *So essentially, both Israel and UK is advanced technologically in terms of warfare, weaponry and all of that, so UK giving arms or even selling arms to Israel automatically makes them stronger. Israel already has things like the iron dome which makes them stronger in technological weaponry but then UK supporting them is just increasing what they already have. Basically, what this represents is UK seems to be supporting war crimes, supporting infringement of fundamental human right, the degradation of humanitarian laws and right which is not supposed to be so, it*

> *is not right. Everybody knows essentially especially from things I have read and seen, Israelis are not even happy that UK is supporting Israel to almost designate an entire population.* ***(Interview with key informant/ Military Personnel, 2025).***

Furthermore, a key respondent replied and stated that some of these consequences are as a result of influential nations not lending their voices enough, she stated that

> *The consequences of this war is fueling unrest in that region. Take for example Iraq, these countries first of all are even Islamic countries and you know how they address themselves as religion of peace but in reality we know they are not entirely peaceful. The region is just breeding fight upon fight and the consequences is even leading to prolong anger among themselves because no matter how they want to patch or settle their differences, both parties are still resenting each other. So say these advances nations can halt sending arms to Israel, though Israel is not even small, but at least they intervene properly by clamouring for peace, not those eye-service peace we see them do on the media, I mean genuine peace maybe there will be some sense of sanity but for now, since arms are still sent there, Hamas will just continue to misbehave, after all they are not scared of dying and maybe they are part of those people that believes Allah has wives for them when they eventually die.* ***(Interview with key informant/ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025).***

Nonetheless, a key informant stated

> *Just like every other country has its national interest at heart, the UK cannot, in fact does not mess with its own foreign policy. This is because their foreign policy has a profound impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and this is because of the shared historical ties, diplomatic relations and military support between UK and Israel. The shared diplomatic bond between with Israel and UK's exportation of arms has been criticized for perpetuating the war. So far, critical thinkers have argued that the UK's foreign policy on Israel-Palestine is biased towards Israel because they have undermined Palestinian rights.* ***(Interview with key informant/ Scholar in International Relations, 2025)***

Furthermore, a key informant gave his opinion stating how exportation of arms has evolved into a booming business yet causing unrest and disunity between Israel and Hamas, he stated that

> *If only these so-called developed countries could cease sending arms to war countries, the war would never have gotten this far, but because of what they stand to gain and show of power, they result to selling arms and if you must know, sending arms to other countries is not cheap, it is really expensive yet they have planned huge sum of budget when it comes to exporting military weapons.* ***(Interview with key informant/ Scholar in International Relations, 2025).***

Based on the responses from key informants, the study analyses that the US and Israel have a long-lasting strategic alliance compared to that of the UK and this is why the US supplies approximately 69% worth of arms to Israel. More so, despite the historical ties and strategic alliance the UK has with Israel, UK provides limited military aid to Israel and its package is significantly smaller as the UK government has imposed strict restrictions on arms export to Israel, which are subject to strict criteria, including fundamental human rights and international humanitarian law considerations.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

4.1 The UK's Arms Export Policy to Israel

This study investigates the repercussion on military equipment export to Israel in the recent dispute between the nations of Israel and Palestine. The findings of this study revealed that since the war began in 2023, the UK decided to limit arms transfer to Israel which was pronounced 2 September, 2024 with the sole reason being that there is an obvious risk that the defense tools are mostly used to aid or facilitate a grave violation of international humanitarian law (Klare, 2024). These findings approve the findings of other scholars who were interviewed who analysed that the UK does not export arms compared to other western countries.

The findings of this study agree with the findings of (Al Khashlok & Williams, 2024) whereby the UK under the Genocide Convention has the responsibility to take meaningful action by preventing the crime of genocide from being committed. The Minister of Business and Trade by name Kemi Badenoch whose decisions continued to grant export licences and maintain existing export licences for arms export to Israel but indicated that they would be kept under careful review. The findings of this study agree with Curtis (2024) whereby Britain struck a new agreement with Israel amid its cruel onslaught on Gaza. The Trade Union Congress in Britain opposed the trade agreement with Israel and was of the believe the government should seize every form of arms exportation given that Israel's non-stop abuse of international law, UN resolutions and strategic disregard of Palestinian labour and human rights.

With the aid of primary source of information collected, this study utilized an interview guide as an instrument for collecting data. The data gotten from the interview revealed that among the 10 interviewees, 9 reported on the minimal exportation of military equipment by the UK to Israel in recent times. This simply means, 90% out of 100% reported that the UK are not major suppliers of arms in the current conflict. They further stated that other western countries particularly the United States of America and Germany are major exporters of arms to enable Israel defeat Palestine. The responses of these respondents are further validated by Towfigh (2024), who emphasized that Germany gave greenlight to Israeli and the capital city of Germany, Berlin approved arms export worth more than $166.2 million in 2024 amid growing international criticism of what human rights organisations tagged as genocidal actions in Gaza Strip.

The respondents responses was further validated by El-Shewy et al, (2024) stating that by the beginning of November 2023, the US had supplied Israel with more bombs weighing more than 25,000 tonnes which was used to bomb Gaza ultimately leading to the death of more than 10,000 Gazans. The US has supplied military aircraft including an F-4 Phantom II, A-4 Skyhawk, F-15 Eagle and F-16 Fighting Falcon all amounting to more than $12.5 billion from October 2023 to October 2024. Furthermore, the responses of the respondents affirmed the findings of Zabakhide (2024) that the relationship between US and Israel is built on anti-terrorist strategies, intelligence sharing and planned initiatives in the Middle East aimed at restricting nuclear ambitions by other countries located in the region. Zabakhide (2024) further stated that Israel has access to numerous special privileges from the US government one of it being that other states wanting to buy arms from the US have to go through the US defense unit while Israel at will to skip this process and negotiate directly with American defense companies who produce weapons. Nevertheless, the former President of US, Joe Biden in September, 2024 met with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister in New York where they discussed bilateral, regional and international problems, with Biden congratulating Netanyahu and the people of Israel. He re-assured the strong bond between both nations and discussed initiative that could benefit Israel amidst the ongoing tension. The US played a significant role as the dominant global power and the strong and lasting US-Israel relationship rooted in shared values and strategic interests has been a primary factor in both countries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provided a comprehensive analysis on the current Israel-Palestinian conflict, though it is a longstanding and significant issue, the conflict is shaped by historical events such as past traumas and injustices that has created a sense of shared identity and purpose among groups of people. The conflict is fueled by external factors including the supply of arms to the region. The UK's arms export policy, in

particular has come under scrutiny for its role in perpetuating the conflict. The issue between Israel and Palestine is a territorial issue. Ultimately, to address the root causes of the conflict and promote a long-lasting peace resolution, security concerns between Israel and Palestine should be addressed by border controls, international peacekeeping forces and also establishing economic cooperation agreements such as free trade areas or joint industrial zones. More so, the UK must re-examine their arms export policies and ensure that they are not contributing to the perpetuation of violence and human rights abuses.

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