

September 6, 2025

"We commend Polish-Palestinian Justice Initiative KAKTUS for their professional and determined effort in bringing this complaint forward in Poland. Their work is a crucial part of the larger, collective push that's steadily eroding the wall of impunity. We urge Poland to embrace its responsibility and ensure that this investigation is pursued thoroughly and transparently. Bit by bit, through efforts like these, we are advancing globally towards a future where accountability will indeed replace impunity."

Dyab Abou Jahjah, Director and Co-Founder of the Hind Rajab Foundation

Israeli arms dealers interrogated in Poland after complained against them filed by KAKTUS Initiative

On September 3, 2025, the Polish-Palestinian Justice Initiative KAKTUS assisted in filing a complaint against representatives of four Israeli arms companies participating in the International Defence Industry Exhibition (MSPO) in Kielce, Poland. The complaint concerns expressing approval and the aiding and abetting of international crimes, including genocide, through the marketing of weapons as "battle-tested" – in reality used against the civilian population in the Gaza Strip.

According to the Jerusalem Post „several employees of Israeli defense companies were summoned for questioning by police (...). Three of those questioned were from Elbit Systems and others from Rafael Advanced Defense Systems. Of the 10 questioned by police, two of them had already left Poland prior to be called in.”¹

A week before, Kaktus Initiative, together with Nomada Association, BAS collective and Academy for Palestine (student movement) appealed to the Polish government and expo organisers not to host Israeli companies at the expo, among other reasons, due to the legal obligations of Poland resulting from the Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide².

The arms expo in Kielce started on Tuesday, on Wednesday the complaint was filed, targeting specific employees present in Poland. At the same time, a protest took place at the expo - two activists from BAS collective spilled blood-like substance at the Elbit's booth (the activists were released yesterday and face criminal charges of property destruction). By Friday all of the Israeli booths were empty.

Ten Israeli companies were present at the fair, including state-owned Rafael and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), as well as private companies Elbit Systems and Smartshooter. Some of them advertised their products as 'battle-tested'³, e.g. during Israel's 'Iron Sword' operation'. In practice, these weapons were tested during the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip, as confirmed by the Palestinians being exterminated in Gaza,

¹ Ahronheim, A. (2025, September 5). *Israeli defense firms face backlash at Poland's premier arms expo*. Jerusalem Post. <https://www.jpost.com/defense-and-tech/article-866508>

² Nomada. (2025, September 2). *Call to exclude Israeli arms companies from MSPO in Kielce*. <https://nomada.info.pl/en/call-to-exclude-israeli-arms-companies-from-mspo-in-kielce/>

³ Middle East Monitor. (2024, June 12). *Gaza genocide fuels Israel's boom in 'battle-tested' weapons industry*. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240612-gaza-genocide-fuels-israels-boom-in-battle-tested-weapon%20s-industry/>

reports by UN institutions⁴, rulings by the International Court of Justice, and opinions of international law experts and human rights organisations.⁵

The notice of possible crimes

The notice was submitted verbally at a local police station in Kielce.

We have stressed that since 7 October 2023, a systematic campaign of extermination has been underway in the Gaza Strip. As The Lancet points out, the actual death toll may be significantly higher than official figures from Gaza Health Ministry suggest, by as much as 59%⁶. Based on the Lancet estimates, by mid-May 2025, the death toll could have exceeded 89,000. According to Israeli army data, by that time, approximately 8,900 people identified as Palestinian fighters had been killed. That means that for each fighter, at least nine civilians were killed by the Israeli army.

This statistic shows that Israeli weapons, advertised as battle-tested, are de facto tested mainly on unarmed civilians. Yet, military cooperation remains crucial in Polish-Israeli bilateral relations. The Polish government, instead of acting on its obligations resulting from the Genocide Convention and the common article 1 of Geneva Conventions, has been announcing new weapons deals with Israel.

The arms industry is the main pillar of the Israeli society, both economically and symbolically. In 2024, Israel achieved **a record arms export figure of \$14.7 billion**⁷ (almost twice as much as in the years preceding the ongoing genocide⁸). More than half of this amount came from European countries⁹.

⁴ Albanese, F. (2024, March 25). *Anatomy of a Genocide: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967* (A/HRC/55/73, advance unedited version). United Nations. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session55/advance-versions/a-hrc-55-73-auv.pdf>

Albanese, F. (2025, June 30). *From Economy of Occupation to Economy of Genocide: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967* (A/HRC/59/23, advance unedited version). United Nations. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session59/advance-version/a-hrc-59-23-aev.pdf>

United Nations General Assembly. (2024, September 20). Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/79/363). United Nations. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a79363-report-special-committee-investigate-israeli-practices-affecting>

⁵ Amnesty International. (2024, December 5). *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman': Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza*. <https://www.amnesty.org.pl/raport-ludobojstwo-w-strefie-gazy/#report-full> Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders. (2024, December 19). *GAZA: Life in a Death Trap*. https://lekarze-bez-granic.pl/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/29_report_gaza-life-in-a-death-trap-report_final.pdf Human Rights Watch. (2024, December 19). *Extermination and Acts of Genocide: Israel Deliberately Depriving Palestinians in Gaza of Water*. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/12/gaza1224web.pdf

⁶ Jamaluddine, Z., S. Abu Sittah, R. Abu Jarad, R. A. Khalil, H. Abu Taha, and G. Burnham. (2025, February). "Traumatic Injury Mortality in the Gaza Strip from Oct 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024: A Capture–Recapture Analysis." *The Lancet*. <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2824%2902678-3>

⁷ Grossman, R. (2025, June 4). *Israeli defense exports hit record \$14.7 billion, despite regional conflicts*. Breaking Defense. <https://breakingdefense.com/2025/06/israeli-defense-exports-hit-record-14-7-billion-despite-regional-conflicts/>

⁸ Fabian, Emanuel. (2025, January 2). *Israeli Arms Sales Break Record for 4th Year in Row, Reaching \$14.8 Billion in 2024*. The Times of Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-arms-sales-break-record-for-4th-year-in-row-reaching-14-8-billion-in-2024/>

⁹ Scheer, Steven. (2025, June 4). *Amid Gaza War, Israel Defence Exports Jump 13% in 2024 to Record \$15 Bln*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/amid-gaza-war-israel-defence-exports-jump-13-2024-record-15-bln-2025-06-04/>

In this context, the presence of Israeli arms companies at the MSPO trade fair in Kielce is another step towards normalising violence. The companies exhibiting in Kielce openly boast about the use of their technologies in the Gaza Strip, even though their effects have been documented as war crimes.

Examples of technologies **promoted in Kielce on 2/09/2025** that were used in documented crimes:

- **Smartshooter** – a computerised sighting system that locks the trigger until the barrel is perfectly aligned. At the trade fair, company representatives openly talk about its use in Gaza. Documentation indicates that the system increases the effectiveness of shooting at moving targets, such as fleeing individuals.
- **IAI (Israel Aerospace Industries)** – manufacturer of LAHAT guided missiles. According to findings by human rights organisations, on 25 August 2025, they were used to fire on the Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, killing 22 civilians, including medical staff, journalists and a child. The case has been referred to the International Criminal Court¹⁰.
- **Elbit Systems** – the main supplier of drones to the IOF advertises in Kielce, among other things, the Thor and Magni X drones used in Gaza. Elbit also supplies the IOF with Hermes drones, which were used extensively in the Gaza Strip on 2 April 2024 in an attack on a World Central Kitchen humanitarian convoy, killing seven volunteers, including a Polish citizen, Damian Soból.
- **Rafael** – a state-owned company producing Spike missiles and Firefly loitering munitions. It was most likely a SPIKE missile attached to an Elbit drone that killed Damian Soból and 6 other volunteers¹¹. The company was proud to present the video footage advertising Firefly used to kill an unarmed Palestinian in Gaza¹².

Legal basis

The conduct of representatives of Israeli companies may constitute offences under the Polish Criminal Code:

- Article 126a of the Polish Criminal Code – condoning international crimes,
- aiding and abetting crimes specified in Articles 118–125 of the Polish Criminal Code – crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, attacks on civilians and protected objects.

Furthermore, allowing such practices in Poland violates:

- **the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948),**

¹⁰ Hind Rajab Foundation & Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. (2025, August 31). HRF and PCHR file ICC complaint on the Nasser Hospital massacre: Exposing the command chain behind the killing of 22 civilians. Hind Rajab Foundation.

<https://www.hindrajabfoundation.org/perpetrators/hrf-and-pchr-file-icc-complaint-on-the-nasser-hospital-massacre-exposing-the-command-chain-behind-the-killing-of-22-civilians>

¹¹ Sardarizadeh, Shayan, Benedict Garman, and Thomas Spencer. (2024, April 2). *Gaza Aid Convoy Strike: What We Know*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68714128>

¹² Rickett, Oscar. (2025). *Israeli Weapons Firm Rafael Uses Gaza Killing in Marketing Campaign*. Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-weapons-firm-rafael-uses-gaza-killing-marketing-campaign>

- **the Geneva Conventions** (in particular Article 1 common: obligation to ensure compliance with humanitarian law),
- **the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT),**
- **EU Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP on arms exports.**

The French precedent – Eurosatory 2024

Similar actions were the subject of intervention in France during the Eurosatory 2024 trade fair. French courts considered complaints from ASER, AFPS and Stop Fuelling Wars, pointing out that allowing Israeli companies to promote weapons in Paris would constitute a violation of France's obligations under the Genocide Convention, the Geneva Conventions and the ATT. As a result, the French government announced the exclusion of the Israeli defence industry from the fair.

Poland, as a party to the same treaties, **has identical legal obligations** and cannot allow the promotion of weapons used for genocide and war crimes.

Call to action

The KAKTUS initiative demands that:

- **Polish law enforcement authorities** immediately initiate proceedings against representatives of Israeli companies present in Kielce,
- **state authorities** (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local authorities) take steps to exclude Israeli companies from ongoing and future arms fairs and to end all cooperation with companies that profit from systematic violations of human rights and international law;
- Poland fulfils its treaty obligations and stops being complicit in the genocide by tolerating its glorification on its territory.

We also call for dropping charges against BAS activists. It is outrageous that nearly seven decades since signing the Genocide Convention, we are still struggling with the same issues as Lemkin did - perpetrators of the worst crimes have impunity, while law is applied rigourously to those protesting the crimes. Those complicit in the the massive destruction of the entire Gaza Strip were free to go after a brief interrogation, while activists protesting genocide were detained and face serious charges.

'Poland cannot become a place where weapons tested on civilians are promoted. The French precedent shows that states can and should block such practices in accordance with international law,' concludes the Kaktus Initiative.