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Marles Faces Criticism Over Weapons Parts Exports to Israel

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Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles has confirmed that Australia does not supply weapons directly to Israel, rejecting calls to impose export restrictions similar to those enacted by Germany amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Marles made these remarks on August 10, 2025, emphasizing that no direct arms shipments from Australia support Israeli military operations.

Since October 7, 2023, the Gaza Health Ministry has reported approximately 61,400 Palestinian deaths related to the conflict. These figures include both civilians and

combatants, though independent verification is limited. The reported casualties have drawn international attention and increased scrutiny of military aid and exports linked to the conflict.

Australia is part of the global supply chain for the F-35 fighter jet program, managed by Lockheed Martin. Australian companies, including Ferra Engineering and Rosebank Engineering, manufacture components used in the jets, which are operated by several countries, including Israel. These components are supplied through a complex international network and are not exported as standalone weapons. The Royal Australian Air Force confirms that Australian industry contributes to contracts valued at over AUD 4 billion.

The Australian Centre for International Justice (ACIJ) has raised concerns about transparency in Australia's defence export system, particularly noting that some components may be supplied indirectly via third countries such as the United States, potentially circumventing direct Australian export controls.

In April 2025, it was reported that Canberra-based Electro Optic Systems supplied a remote weapon system that has been tested by the Israel Defence Forces. The Department of Defence stated that a review of export permits identified 66 active permits related to Israel, with 16 permits amended or allowed to lapse following the review, which was prompted by concerns raised by Palestinian human rights groups.

Germany has suspended military exports to Israel since 2024, reflecting a more cautious approach in response to the conflict. In contrast, Australia has maintained its export policies, drawing criticism from opposition parties and advocacy groups. The Liberal National Party has questioned the government's transparency and oversight regarding defence exports.

The Arms Trade Treaty, to which Australia is a party, requires signatories to prevent arms transfers that could contribute to violations of international humanitarian law. Advocacy groups have called for stricter monitoring and controls to ensure compliance.