

Morocco welcomes Israel's weapons ship, proves complicity in Gaza genocide

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By Maryam Qarehgozlou / PRESS TV

Massive protests have been reported in Morocco following the docking of a U.S.-flagged vessel shipping American weapons to the Israeli regime amid the ongoing genocidal war on Gaza.

Chanting “Whoever welcomes Israel’s ships is not one of us,” hundreds of Moroccan protesters protested against their own government for being complicit in the Israeli-American genocidal actions.

After the Spanish authorities turned it away following public outcry, Maersk Denver was permitted to dock in Tangier Med on Saturday, and it departed the following day, according to reports.

Its AIS signal and published schedule indicated Oman as its next destination.

According to the Morocco chapter of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS), another Maersk ship, the Nysted, arrived in Tangier on Monday under a Hong Kong flag to load the material that the Denver had previously unloaded in the Moroccan port.

Both Nysted’s AIS signal and published schedule indicate its stop in Tangier on Monday and its final destination as Haifa, a port city in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The Maersk ships were originally intended to dock at the European port of Algeciras, one of the continent’s largest. However, in response to pressure from activists and lawmakers, Spain’s foreign ministry announced that the two Maersk ships in question “will not dock in Spain.”

The Spanish authorities also stated their intention to investigate reports suggesting that Maersk vessels had previously been granted permission to dock while transporting military equipment to Israel.

Maersk confirmed to Agence France-Presse (AFP) that Spanish authorities denied docking privileges to Maersk Denver in Algeciras during its voyage from New York to West Asia.

When Spain revoked Maersk Denver’s permit to dock at its port, it rerouted to Tangier in Morocco.

A Maersk company spokesperson claimed that the company transports only legal goods, excluding military weapons and ammunition, to the Tel Aviv regime.

However, the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), a transnational grassroots movement advocating for the liberation of Palestine, revealed on November 4 that from September 2023 to September 2024, the Danish shipping and logistics giant A.P. Moller Maersk, shipped millions of pounds of military goods to the Israeli military from the United States, involving 2,110 shipments.

Out of these shipments, 827 contained components for armored personnel carriers, tactical vehicles, aircraft, and projectile systems, the investigation revealed, conducted by PYM as part of its Mask Off Maersk campaign.

“The evidence suggests that Maersk typically sends one (1) ship per week from New Jersey to Spain, which typically includes approximately 1,000 tons of military cargo on this vessel on behalf of the Israeli military,” the investigative report stated.

“Cross-referencing ship schedules and historical data, it can be safely concluded that the [Israeli ministry of military affairs] rarely misses a weekly trip on this line.”

Following these revelations, the Palestinian-led BDS movement promoting boycotts, divestments, and economic sanctions against the apartheid regime, also urged Morocco to ban the docking of Maersk Denver.

“This is in violation of a UNHRC resolution, a UNGA resolution, and statements by dozens of UN human rights experts, all calling for a military embargo on Israel due to its illegal occupation and its commission

of a plausible genocide against 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, as the ICJ determined earlier this year,” BDS said in a statement on Friday.

BDS warned that if Morocco allows the Maersk Denver to dock in any of its ports, according to the UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, it may be in violation of the Genocide Convention and relevant rulings by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Having normalized relations with Israel, the Moroccan monarchy is entrenching this betrayal by signing military and security deals with the apartheid regime.

Morocco's official policy vs popular opinion

This is not the first instance of Morocco's role in facilitating the delivery of arms and ammunition to the Israeli regime amid its devastating war on Gaza.

In June, the Israeli naval vessel INS Komemiyut made a technical stop at the Tangier Med port in Morocco to refuel and restock supplies for its crew of naval combat soldiers which also led to public outcry, as reported by the Moroccan media outlet Le Desk.

Morocco's opposition Justice and Development Party (PJD) has recently called for an investigation into the docking of two ships transporting military supplies to the Israeli regime.

Former Prime Minister and PJD leader Abdelillah Benkirane urged the government to communicate with citizens about the situation.

“We call on the government to reveal the truth to citizens, communicate with them regarding the circulating news, and take full responsibility,” Benkirane said in a press conference on Monday.

The current debacle surrounding Morocco's overt ties to Israel highlights a stark contrast between the government's official stance and the pro-Palestinian sentiments widely held by the Moroccan people.

The North African country last Monday joined over 50 nations in signing a letter addressed to the UN Secretary-General, calling for immediate measures to halt the provision of arms, munitions, and related equipment to Israel.

Meanwhile, despite growing public and political pressure to end the normalization accord brokered by the US in 2020, the Moroccan government persists in maintaining its diplomatic ties with Israel.

Social media users expressed outrage over Morocco's decision to allow the Israeli-bound ship to dock at their port, perceiving the move as tacit support for Israel's genocidal actions in Gaza.

Netizens took to various social media platforms to voice their concerns and demanded greater accountability from the Moroccan government while opposing any involvement in facilitating Israel's war crimes that exacerbate the dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

“A Christian country doing more to help than the government or Morocco, a Muslim country,” said one user on X after Spain refused to dock Maersk Denver.

“Can anyone explain why Muslim countries do not stop supporting Israel after they commit genocide in Gaza? Any particular reason that I don't know,” wrote another user.

A third Maersk ship, Maersk Seletar, is scheduled to arrive in Algeciras on Thursday or Friday. Its final destination is unknown.

BDS in a post on Instagram on Monday warned that more ships might reroute to Portugal or Morocco amid Spain's refusal to allow Maersk ships to dock at its port.

It also urged civil society in Portugal to take appropriate action.

"We call on the people in Portugal to keep pressuring their government to comply with Portugal's obligations under international law," BDS said.

"Stop these vessels from access to ports and territorial waters, do not allow them to be registered as flying the Portuguese flag," it added.

A campaign dubbed "#BlockTheBoat", spearheaded by BDS, has gained significant momentum on social media platforms, with supporters expressing their indignation and opposition to the ongoing military aid provided to Israel.

In mid-September, the BDS campaign launched a call to action targeting countries with a stake in the MV Kathrin, a cargo vessel carrying explosives intended for Israel.

The campaign urged those nations to prevent the ship from docking and to cease their involvement in the year-long Israeli war on Gaza, which has claimed nearly 43,700 lives.

The campaign called upon the public to exert pressure on their respective governments to comply with international law and abide by the rulings of the United Nations' highest court.

"Participation in arms transfer to Israel amounts to complicity in genocide, crimes of humanity and war crimes. Refraining from playing any direct or indirect role in arming Israel during its genocidal carnage in Gaza is a legal duty for all States," BDS says.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/369776-morocco-welcomes-israels-weapons-ship-proves-complicity-in-gaza-genocide>



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