

British foreign minister says UK will continue to arm the Israeli war machine

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Washington, April 9 (RHC)-- The United Kingdom will not halt arms sales to Israel by British companies after reviewing the latest legal advice on the matter, Foreign Minister David Cameron has said. Six months into the Israeli assault on Gaza, triggered by the October 7 Hamas-led attack on Israel, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's government has come under heavy pressure to revoke licences that allow

arms exports to Israel.

“The latest assessment leaves our position on export licences unchanged. This is consistent with the advice that I and other ministers have received,” Cameron said on Tuesday at a press conference with his U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken in Washington, DC. “And as ever, we will keep the position under review.”

Britain has supplied 42 million pounds (\$53 million) of arms to Israel in 2022.

Last week, three former senior UK judges joined more than 600 members of the British legal profession in calling for the government to halt arms sales to Israel, saying it could make Britain complicit in genocide in Gaza.

Some opposition political parties in Britain have called for the government to recall Parliament from its current holiday and revoke the export licences, and also to publish the legal advice the government has used to reach its position.

“This was yet another missed opportunity from David Cameron to move himself and other UK officials away from their current complicity in Israeli war crimes, apartheid and possible genocide,” said Amnesty International UK’s crisis response manager, Kristyan Benedict.

Israel denies it has committed war crimes or genocide in its assault on Gaza, and has rejected the use of the term “apartheid” to describe its treatment of Palestinians. At least 33,360 people have been killed and 75,993 others wounded in Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7, according to Palestinian authorities.

Cameron said Britain continued to have “grave concerns around the humanitarian access issue in Gaza.” He defended the decision not to publish the legal advice on arms export licences. He said it was an important principle that ministers act consistently with legal advice without making it public.

“The overall judgement is that those export licences will remain open and continue,” he said.

His visit to the United States comes as Israel says it has set a date for a military offensive on Rafah in southern Gaza, where more than a million displaced Palestinians have sought shelter from the Israeli assault.

Blinken on Tuesday said he expects talks between Israeli and US officials to take place next week on a potential Israeli military operation in Rafah.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that victory over Hamas required entry into Rafah and said there was a date for the operation, despite Washington’s warning not to go ahead.

Blinken said Washington has not been given a date. “On the contrary, what we have is an ongoing conversation with Israel about any Rafah operation,” Blinken said, adding that he expected the talks would continue next week.

“I don’t anticipate any actions being taken before those talks, and for that matter, I don’t see anything imminent. But there’s a lot of work to be done and it remains our conviction that major military operations in Rafah would be extremely dangerous for civilians who would be caught in harm’s way,” he said.

Blinken also said the U.S. is continuing to work closely with Qatar and Egypt on a potential ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. He said that 400 trucks were cleared to go into Gaza on Monday, the most since October 7, when the conflict was triggered.



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