



ISRAELI ARMS TRANSFERS TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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I. Introduction

Israel is one of a range of smaller suppliers of major weapons and other military equipment to sub-Saharan Africa. It has long sold or given weapons to a host of developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, and the deals are often accompanied by serving or retired Israeli military personnel and Israeli civilian contractors as instructors.¹ Although Israeli arms exports, especially of major weapons, to sub-Saharan Africa are limited, Israeli weapons, brokers and instructors are likely to sometimes have a more significant impact than mere numbers of supplied weapons imply.

While exports of major weapons from Israel are well documented, information on other weapons and equipment, on training and on motivations for and restraints on exports is very much based on occasional statements from officials or companies and on media reports. Since the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) became operational in 1993, Israel has submitted data on exports of major arms every year. The Israeli reports have been of a relatively high standard as they include details about the actual type and designation of equipment. While many of the larger transfers reported by Israel to UNROCA are also well documented in other open sources, UNROCA reporting has often revealed smaller transfers, specially to African states such as Chad and Uganda.

However, Israel has not included background information about the import and export of small arms and light weapons (SALW), as invited by the UN General Assembly since December 2003.² In 2010 the UN Secretary-General requested for countries to give their view on the continuing operation of UNROCA and the possible inclusion of SALW as a separate reporting category. Israel was one of the few states that responded, providing a note explaining that it 'views the illicit trade in SALW, in all its aspects, and their use by unauthorized recipients, including terrorists, as an imminent threat to security and stability, which effects and harms civilian population and soci-

¹ Beit-Hallahmi, B., *The Israeli Connection* (Pantheon Books: New York, 1987), p. xii.

² UN General Assembly Resolution 58/54, 8 Dec. 2003.

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SUMMARY

● Israel accounted for less than 1 per cent of transfers of major weapons to sub-Saharan Africa for the period 2006–10.

Deliveries consisted mainly of small numbers of artillery, unmanned aerial vehicles, armoured vehicles and patrol craft. However, in addition to major weapons, Israel also supplied small arms and light weapons, military electronics and training to several countries in the region. Israeli weapons, trainers and brokers have been observed in numerous African trouble spots and may play a bigger role than their numbers imply.

The Israeli arms export decision-making process remains unclear. Issues like human rights and potential diversion or misuse of delivered weapons seem to have gained importance, but deliveries to conflicts and undemocratic regimes continue. While the African arms market is small, its commercial aspect is an important driver for Israel's arms sales. However, developing political and military ties to several African countries is also gaining importance, particularly to counter Iranian or suspected-Iranian influences. Israeli arms transfers to Africa illustrate the need to include smaller suppliers and issues such as training and intelligence systems in discussions on controls of the arms trade.



eties'.³ However, the note remained non-committal on the need to include SALW in UNROCA. The Israeli Government is also one of the few Western countries that do not publish a regular national report on arms exports.

This SIPRI Background Paper aims to give an overview of Israeli arms exports to sub-Saharan Africa during the period 2006–10. Section II describes the role of Israel as a supplier of arms and training to Africa. Section III explains the motives for and restraints on exports to the region. Section IV describes the framework of regulation and oversight of Israeli arms exports. Section V discusses how weapons supplied from Israel have been used in Africa and what impact they have had. Section VI offers brief conclusions.

II. Israeli arms exports to sub-Saharan Africa

For most years since 1975, Israel has ranked generally just below the 10 largest exporters of major weapons.⁴ For the period 2006–10, Israel was the 11th largest exporter of major weapons worldwide, accounting for almost 2 per cent of the volume of international deliveries of major weapons. Israeli deliveries to sub-Saharan recipients made up only a fraction of these exports: for the period 2006–10, less than 2 per cent of the volume of Israel's exports of major weapons went to sub-Saharan states. Similarly, less than 1 per cent of deliveries of major weapons to sub-Saharan Africa came from Israel.

In the period 2006–10 Israel delivered major weapons to nine sub-Saharan states—Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Nigeria, Rwanda, the Seychelles, South Africa and Uganda (see table 1). For most of these recipients, imports from Israel made up less than a quarter of their total arms imports.

Israel publishes an aggregated annual financial value of deliveries of arms to all recipients, but it does not give details of the values for specific regions or recipients. Similarly, most Israeli companies do not breakdown their exports in their financial reports. Thus, the financial value of Israeli arms exports to sub-Saharan Africa is not known, and African countries are rarely mentioned as important customers for weapons by Israeli officials or companies or in media reports. The specific information that is known shows that Nigeria is the largest African importer of Israeli weapons, accounting for almost 50 per cent of Israeli deliveries to sub-Saharan states. The value reported in 2009 of recently signed Israeli deals with Nigeria, most likely since 2006, was \$500 million.⁵

While Israel has large stocks of major weapons for sale, most or all Israeli major weapons delivered in the period 2006–10 to sub-Saharan Africa were newly produced. The smaller weapons, such as rifles, and other equipment delivered to sub-Saharan African recipients are also likely to have been new productions.

³ Israel report to UNROCA for 2009, submitted 10 Aug. 2010, <http://unhq-appspub-01.un.org/UNODA/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

⁴ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <<http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/>>.

⁵ Melman, Y., 'Why did Lieberman really go to Africa?', *Ha'aretz*, 9 Sep. 2009; and Melman, Y., 'Israeli arms dealers join Lieberman's entourage to Africa', *Ha'aretz*, 6 Aug. 2009.

**Table 1.** Transfers of major weapons by Israel to sub-Saharan Africa, 2006–10

Recipient	Number ordered	Weapon	Description	Order year	Delivery year	Number delivered	Comments
Cameroon	(8)	CARDOM	SP mortar	(2006)	2006	8	Designation uncertain (reported as 120-mm mortar)
Chad	(5)	RAM	APV	(2008)	2008	(5)	RAM-2000 version
	6	RAM	APV	(2006)	2006	6	RAM-2000 version
	(31)	RAM	APV	2007	2008	31	RAM-2000 version
Equatorial Guinea	2	Saar-4	Patrol craft	2008			Delivery 2011
Lesotho	6	RAM	APV	(2006)	2006	6	
Nigeria	(9)	Aerostar	UAV	2006	2007	(9)	Part of \$260 m. deal; part of 3 Aerostar UAV systems
Rwanda	2	Shaldag	Patrol craft	(2008)	2009–10	2	\$25 m. deal
	(5)	Lynx	SP MRL	(2007)	2008	5	Designation uncertain
Seychelles	1	EL/M-2022	MP ac radar	2010			For 1 Do-228 MP aircraft from India
South Africa	..	Litening	Ac EO sys	(2009)	2010	(2)	For Gripen combat aircraft
Uganda	(3)	ATMOS	SP gun	2008	2009	3	
	(18)	CARDOM	SP mortar	2008	2009	18	

() = uncertain data/estimate; .. = not available; Ac = aircraft; APV = armoured patrol vehicle; EO = electro-optical; MP = maritime patrol; SP = self-propelled; SP MRL = self-propelled multiple rocket launcher; ac = aircraft; MP = maritime patrol, SP = self-propelled; EO = electro-optical; sys = system; UAV = unmanned aerial vehicle.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <<http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/>>, 31 Mar. 2011.

Exports of major arms and related components in the period 2006–10

Israel delivered very few major weapons to Africa in the period 2006–10. The largest deal for major weapons in which actual deliveries were identified was the sale of an integrated coastal surveillance system, including air-, land- and sea-based surveillance systems, to Nigeria in 2006. The deal included 3 Aerostar unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) systems each with 3 to 6 UAVs, 3 Seastar unmanned surface vehicle (USV) systems and 10 unidentified coastal radars. According to Aeronautics, the Israeli company involved, the deal was worth \$260 million.⁶ As such, the arms deal is possibly the largest that Nigeria signed in 2006–10. However, the price suggests that a large part of the value is linked to command and control centres and a communication network, both of which are not included in SIPRI data on major weapons. In 2008 Nigeria signed a \$25 million deal that included two Shaldag patrol craft

⁶ The value has also been reported as \$200 million (€115 million) and includes also 2 maritime patrol aircraft sourced from a non-Israeli company. 'Israeli arms contract—Govt paid 107.5 million Euros from crude account', *Daily Trust* (Abuja), 1 Aug. 2006; Aeronautics, 'Nigeria develops unmanned coastal capability', Press release, 12 Apr. 2006, <<http://www.aeronautics-sys.com/?CategoryID=264&ArticleID=201>>; and *Air & Cosmos*, 9 June 2006, p. 8.



delivered in 2009–10 and training by Israelis for Nigerian crews to take place in both Israel and Nigeria.⁷

The largest *reported* Israeli arms deal in Africa is a set of contracts worth \$1 billion with Angola in 2006. This included unidentified equipment from the Israeli arms companies Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Tadiran as well as \$230 million for self-propelled artillery, mortars and ammunition from the Israeli arms company Soltam.⁸ However, the deals have never been confirmed nor have there been reports of equipment produced by these companies in Angola.

Equatorial Guinea placed arms orders worth up to \$100 million in 2008. These included two large patrol craft (scheduled to be delivered in 2011 after crews complete training in Israel), UAVs and additional patrol craft.⁹

Deliveries of major weapons to Cameroon, Chad, Lesotho, Rwanda and Uganda consisted of small numbers of self-propelled guns, mortars or light armoured vehicles. South Africa received several targeting pods for use with South African guided bombs on Swedish-supplied Gripen combat aircraft. Israel offered a large package of weapons and equipment to the Central African Republic in 2010 to rebuild its armed forces to cope with several rebel forces, but no orders have yet been reported.¹⁰

Other military equipment that Israeli companies have sold to customers in sub-Saharan Africa includes surveillance and other electronic systems for military or police roles. However, much of the trade in these systems is shrouded in secrecy, and reports of sales often omit important details, such as information on the recipient. For example, in 2009 there were unconfirmed reports of sales of the Israeli-produced Falcon Eye or Mini Falcon UAVs to ‘an African state’, possibly Uganda, which had earlier acquired advanced electro-optical surveillance equipment from Israel for use on light aircraft.¹¹ Israeli-produced equipment for intercepting communications was reported as part of arms deals with Chad in 2007–2008, and an Israeli company offered intelligence equipment to the Central African Republic in 2010.¹² In December 2008 the Israeli company Top I Vision reported the

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⁷ Volman, D., ‘Nigerian government gears up for another offensive in the Delta’, African Security Research Project, Sep. 2009, <<http://concernedafricascholars.org/african-security-research-project/?p=80>>; and Tov, R., ‘On Israeli crimes in Africa and western media’, *Forum on facts*, 24 Oct. 2010, <<http://www.roytov.com/articles/dealer.htm>>.

⁸ Melman, Y., ‘Angolan defense officials fired over arms deals with Israel’, *Ha’aretz*, 27 Oct. 2006; Melman, Y., ‘Sell as much as you can’, *Ha’aretz*, 2 Apr. 2006; and Feldman, Y., ‘High times in Angola’, *Ha’aretz*, 1 Jan. 2009.

⁹ Melman, Y., ‘Sources: Israeli businesswoman brokering E. Guinea arms sales’, *Ha’aretz*, 12 Nov. 2008; Israeli Shipyards, News item, 15 Dec. 2010, <<http://www.israel-shipyards.com/news.asp>>; Shlomo, B. and Kurz, A. (eds), *Strategic Survey for Israel 2010* (Institute for National Security Studies: Tel Aviv, 2009); Mazumdar, M., ‘Equatorial Guinea awaits OPV deliveries’, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 7 Jan. 2011, p. 6; and Melman, Y., ‘Israelis to train Equatorial Guinea presidential guard’, *Ha’aretz*, 3 June 2005.

¹⁰ Melman, Y., ‘Israel to renew ties with Chad’, *Ha’aretz*, 26 Mar. 2005; Brenner, M., ‘Security business’, *Jeune Afrique*, 5 Apr. 2010; ‘Des armes, des armes et des armes’ [Weapons, weapons and weapons], *Tchadactuel*, 30 Nov. 2008; and ‘Chad/Sudan, who shoots first?’, *Africa Confidential*, vol. 50, no. 9 (1 May 2009), p. 8.

¹¹ Egozi, A., ‘Innocon sells an ‘African state’ its new Falcon Eye UAV’, *Flight International*, 6 Jan. 2010. According to the producer Innocon, the Mini Falcon UAV was offered in early 2009 to Uganda. Egozi, A., ‘Israel’s Innocon responds to Ugandan UAV request’, *Flight International*, 28 May 2009.

¹² Melman (note 9); Brenner (note 9); ‘Des armes, des armes et des armes’ (note 9); and ‘Chad/Sudan, who shoots first?’ (note 9).



sale of an aerostat surveillance system to an African country for a ‘major security project’, but neither the customer’s identity nor the precise nature of ‘security’ was revealed.¹³ The involvement of Tadiran in the 2006 Angolan deal (see above) suggests that communication and electronic intelligence equipment was included.

Exports of small arms and light weapons

The presence of Israel Weapon Industries (IWI), the main Israeli producer of small arms, in Africa is probably indicative of the importance of Africa for Israeli SALW exports. While IWI provides no data on its customers, its website includes a map indicating 12 IWI office locations worldwide, of these, 3 are in Africa, the highest number for any continent.¹⁴ Among other items, IWI manufactures the Galil and Tavor rifles, Negev machine guns and Uzi sub-machine guns. Such SALW are used by many African armed and security forces, but probably often only in smaller numbers for selected parts of the armed and security forces, such as elite presidential guards or special forces. Much of the information on Israeli SALW is gleaned from pictorial evidence, and it is often difficult to determine from where and when these weapons were delivered. For example, the Galil was photographed in service with the Cameroon presidential guard in pictures from 2008 or 2009; in Côte d’Ivoire from 2010 and 2011; and with the Djibouti police from 2006.¹⁵ Other sources put the Galil in service in Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Rwanda and Swaziland.¹⁶ The Negev machine gun was spotted with the presidential guard in the DRC in 2010.¹⁷ Negev light machine guns and Galil sniper rifles were also seen in Kenya in 2009.¹⁸ Galil rifles, Negev machine guns and Uzi sub-machine guns have been reported in use in Equatorial Guinea and are likely to have been at least partly included in the training deal or in other SALW deals discussed above.¹⁹ It is also likely that these deals included the delivery in 2006 from Serbia of ammunition for the Galil, Negev and Uzi.²⁰

The largest deal for major weapons in which actual deliveries were identified was to Nigeria in 2006

¹³ The system is offered for military and police work and has been used in Israel also for monitoring of car traffic and crowds at concerts. Top I Vision, ‘News & Events’, <<http://www.topivision.com/>>.

¹⁴ Israel Weapon Industries, <<http://www.israel-weapon.com/?catid=%7Bbe33b6e6-080b-45b8-ad85-c4e1e40d0422%7D>>.

¹⁵ Picture on Military Photos Forum, 27 Sep. 2009, <<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?121693-REQ-African-militaries/page33>>; Picture on Military Photos Forum, 29 Mar. 2011, <<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?52059-Ivory-Coast-pictures/page5>>; and ‘Laurent Gbagbo capture footage emerges’, BBC News, 13 Apr. 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13065030>>.

¹⁶ Jones, R. and Ness, L. (eds), *Jane’s Infantry Weapons, 2008–2009* (Jane’s Information Group: Coulsdon, 2008).

¹⁷ Picture on Military Photos Forum, 7 June 2010, <<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?121693-REQ-African-militaries/page35>>.

¹⁸ ‘Kenya wary of al-Shabaab threat’, Video from NTV Kenya, YouTube, uploaded 12 June 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYtgw7eYQho&feature=player_embedded#at=134>.

¹⁹ Melman, ‘Sources: Israeli businesswoman brokering E. Guinea arms sales’ (note 8).

²⁰ Melman, ‘Sources: Israeli businesswoman brokering E. Guinea arms sales’ (note 8). According to official Serbian data, 30 000 rounds of 7.62-mm and 1 million rounds of 5.56-mm ammunition were specified for the Galil, 300 000 rounds of 5.56-mm ammunition were specified for the Negev and 1 million rounds of 9-mm ammunition were specified for the Uzi as well as 1 050 000 rounds of 9-mm pistol ammunition ordered via a company in Saint Kitts and Nevis. Capelle, J., Danssaert, P.,



Some of these weapons are likely to have been delivered in the past five years. However, the Galil has been in production since the early 1970s and the Negev since 1997. Pictorial evidence of more recently Israeli-produced arms in several African countries shows use of the Tavor rifle, in production only since 2006. The Tavor has been identified in 2010 as in use with the Nigerian State Security Service and with bodyguards of the Ethiopian president.²¹ The delivery of Galils and Tavors in 2006 to Chad is one of the few cases where actual delivery dates are known from open sources.²²

Maintenance, overhaul and modernization

In addition to producing or supplying new weapons, Israeli companies are involved in maintenance, overhaul or modernization of existing military equipment. This often includes items not originally produced in Israel. In 2007, Saymar, an Israeli company specializing in modernizing armoured vehicles, received a \$10 million order for the modernization of Kenyan AML armoured cars with new engines and probably also improvements to the fire-control system.²³

Israeli companies are also involved in developing upgrades ordered from other countries by African customers. IAI and other Israeli companies cooperated with a Polish company in developing a modernization package for Su-22 combat aircraft largely based on Israeli avionics. An unknown number of Angolan Su-22s have since been modernized in Angola and Poland. In addition to Israeli avionics, 'smart munitions' (most likely guided bombs) have possibly been delivered to Angola by Israel for the Su-22.²⁴ In other cases, Israeli involvement could be suspected, as for example, with the sale of 82 AML (or Eland) armoured cars by the Belgian company Sabiex to Chad. Sabiex had bought the vehicles from South Africa and overhauled or even modernized them in Belgium. However, it is plausible that Israeli expertise or components were involved since Sabiex has direct links with Saymar (which developed an AML upgrade package) and with Israel Military Industries (IMI).²⁵

Israeli companies are also involved in developing upgrades ordered from other countries by African customers

Johnson Thomas, B., *Recent Arms Deliveries from Successor States of the Former Yugoslavia* (International Peace Information Service: Antwerp, 19 Mar. 2007), p. 42.

²¹ Picture published on Nairaland Forum, 26 Nov. 2010, <<http://www.nairaland.com/nigeria/topic-557238.0.html>>; and Picture published on Military Photos Forum, 14 Dec. 2010, <<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?191046-Ethiopian-Tavors>>.

²² United Nations, Security Council, Letter dated 7 Nov. 2008 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2008/647, 11 Nov. 2008, pp. 61–62.

²³ Gelfand, L. and Katz, Y., 'Procurement concerns unfold in Kenyan probe', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 1 Dec. 2010, p. 18.

²⁴ Kowalski, J., 'Poland to modernise Angolan Su-22s', *Air Forces Monthly*, Oct. 2007, p. 20; and Cooper, T. et. al., *African MiGs*, volume 1 (Harpia Publishing; Houston, TX, 2010), p. 24.

²⁵ The director of Saymar and a high executive of IMI have been part of the 4-member board of Sabiex since 2005. Mampaey, L., *Commerce d'armement triangulaire Belgique-France-Tchad: limites et lacunes de la réglementation belge et européenne* [Belgium–France–Chad arms trade triangle: limitations and shortcomings of Belgian and French regulations], Note d'Analyse (GRIP: Brussels, 14 Feb. 2008), <<http://www.grip.org/bdg/pdf/g0951.pdf>>.



Training

Since the 1950s Israelis and Israeli companies have been involved in training African armed forces, including special forces and presidential guards.²⁶ Israeli instructors, either working for Israeli companies or for foreign companies, have trained the presidential guard of Equatorial Guinea since 2005 and a special Ugandan Army and police anti-terrorist unit in 2010.²⁷ Nigerian Navy special forces were reportedly trained in 2009 in Israel and by an Israeli company in Nigeria.²⁸ Israelis have also been reported as training Guinean forces after the December 2008 military coup by Moussa Camara. The Israeli company Global CST won a \$10 million order in 2009 that included the training, arming and equipping of Camara's presidential guard, despite the fact that the company only had a permit to 'survey' the needs of Guinea. When the Israeli Ministry of Defense (MOD) learned of the contract, Global CST reportedly transferred the security element of the contract, probably including the Israeli instructors, to a South African company.²⁹ However, according to the Guinean Government, Israelis were involved in military training in 2009 and only left around the time Camara gave up power.³⁰ Global CST claimed that a contract was signed in August 2009 to 'provide a presidential guard', but it had to 'divert' the contract to a non-Israeli company when it did not receive a permit from the Israeli authorities.³¹ According to the Israeli MOD, no Israeli company was involved in military training in Guinea, but the MOD also commented that the Israeli Government could do little to prevent Israelis—employed by non-Israeli companies or working as private persons—from doing business in conflict zones.³²

Since the 1950s Israelis and Israeli companies have been involved in training African armed forces

Brokering

It has also been reported that Israeli companies and citizens have acted as brokers in arms sales from other states to Africa. For example, Serbia reported exports worth \$1.7 million (part of licences for a value of \$2.1 million) in 2008. This included exports of automatic grenade launchers, 30-mm and 40-mm ammunition, 122-mm artillery ammunition, 82-mm and 120-mm mortar shells and castings to Israel for Israeli military and civilian users and for re-export to Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Uganda.³³ Israeli compa-

²⁶ Marshall, E. S., *Israel: Current Issues and Historical Background* (Nova Science Publishers: Hauppauge, NY, 2002), p. 221.

²⁷ Melman, 'Israelis to train Equatorial Guinea presidential guard' (note 8); and Khisa, I., 'Anti-terror squad passed out in time for al Shahaab', *Daily Monitor* (Kampala), 19 July 2010.

²⁸ Information posted on Military Photos Forum, 17 Dec. 2010, <<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?121693-REQ-African-militaries/page42>>.

²⁹ Melman, Y., 'Defense Ministry fines firm that sent elite training force to Guinea', *Ha'aretz*, 6 Oct. 2010. The contract also included a water purification plant. Katz, Y., 'Security and defense: a fix-it firm for ailing nations', *Jerusalem Post*, 12 Nov. 2010.

³⁰ Heller, A., 'Israel fines firm for dealing with Guinean junta', *The Guardian*, 18 May 2010.

³¹ Amnesty International, *Guinea: 'You Did Not Want the Military, So Now We Are Going to Teach You a Lesson'* (Amnesty International: London, Feb. 2010).

³² Heller (note 31).

³³ The report does not specify which equipment is for which end-user. Serbian Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, 'Annual report on the transfers of controlled goods in 2008',



nies have also acted as brokers for non-Israeli weapons and equipment as part of sales of Israeli-produced weapons. When IWI sold Galil and Tavor rifles to Chad in 2006, it also brokered a deal for 4 million rounds of ammunition for the rifles from a Serbian company, despite the fact that such ammunition is also produced in Israel.³⁴

Expatriate Israelis living in African states have long been instrumental in arranging arms deals for Israeli companies.³⁵ An Israeli businessman living in Nigeria organized the large deal for Israeli surveillance systems in 2006 and the sale of two Israeli patrol craft in 2008.³⁶ This same person, like other Israeli expatriates, has also been reportedly involved in arranging arms deals that have no further connection with Israel, for example the sale of aircraft from Ukraine to Nigeria.³⁷ Another Israeli expatriate brokered the 2008 sale of patrol craft to Equatorial Guinea.³⁸

There have also been occurrences of Israeli involvement in illegally organizing or selling weapons or services to several African states. For example, in January 2010, four Israelis working for small 'military and defence' companies (including two in the United States) were among 22 persons indicted in the USA for violating anti-corruption laws. All 22 had agreed to the demand for 'commission' on a \$16 million arms deal from an undercover US Federal Bureau of Investigation agent posing as an African defence minister.³⁹ In June 2010 an Israeli 'defence consultant' was among several persons indicted in the USA for attempting to sell 6000 AK-47 rifles to Somaliland using a falsified end-user certificate for Chad.⁴⁰

III. Explaining Israeli arms exports: motives and restraints

In the 1950s and 1960s Israeli interest in Africa was very much driven by political, diplomatic and military issues, as Israel struggled to come to terms with neighbouring Arab states. Israeli arms exports in this period mainly consisted of military aid in the form of equipment and training, which was provided to Ethiopia and most of the newly independent African countries. By 1967 Israel had established official relations with 33 of 41 African states.⁴¹

24 Sep. 2008, pp. 37, 53.

³⁴ United Nations (note 22).

³⁵ Chazan, N., 'Israel and Africa: challenges for a new era', *Israel and Africa: Assessing the Past, Envisioning the Future* (American Jewish Committee/Tel Aviv University: New York/Tel Aviv, May 2006), p. 7.

³⁶ 'Israeli arms contract—Govt paid 107.5 million Euros from crude account' (note 6); Melman, 'Israeli arms dealers join Lieberman's entourage to Africa' (note 5); Jimoh, A., 'NGO faults Nigeria-Israel arms deal', *Daily Trust* (Abuja), 28 Sep. 2009; Tov (note 7); and Melman, Y., 'Inside Intel / meanwhile, back in Nigeria ...', *Ha'aretz*, 16 Sep. 2010.

³⁷ Melman, 'Israeli arms dealers join Lieberman's entourage to Africa' (note 5); Jimoh (note 37); and Tov (note 7).

³⁸ Melman, 'Sources: Israeli businesswoman brokering E. Guinea arms sales' (note 8).

³⁹ Melman, Y. and Mozgovaya, N., 'U.S. indicts four Israelis in international bribery case', *Ha'aretz*, 20 Jan. 2010.

⁴⁰ Melman, Y. and Ravid, B., 'U.S. court indicts Israeli suspected of arms trade with Somalia', *Ha'aretz*, 28 June 2010; and Woods II, W., 'Claremont man pleads guilty in rifles smuggling case', *Claremont Now*, 6 Oct. 2010.

⁴¹ Eilam, U., 'Defense export control in 2007: state of affairs', *Strategic Assessment*, vol. 9, no. 4 (Mar. 2007); Bard, M. G., 'The evolution of Israel's Africa policy', Jewish Virtual Library, 2010, <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsources/Politics/africa.html>>; Melman, 'Israeli arms dealers join Lieberman's entourage to Africa' (note 5); Chazan (note 36), pp. 2-3; and Beit-Hallahmi (note 1), pp. 8, 39-40, 51.



However, most African countries ended diplomatic relations with Israel in the early 1970s, and Israel accepted diplomatic isolation, and until recently made few efforts to improve relations with African states.⁴²

Since the 1970s Israeli arms exports have been strongly motivated by Israel's strategic military and economic aims. Exports were and continue to be seen as critical for the sustaining of an arms industry that can supply Israeli armed forces.⁴³ According to Udi Shai, the Director General of the Israeli MOD, arms exports are 'the most lucrative industry for the state of Israel'.⁴⁴ For the past few years it is estimated that around 70–80 per cent of the earnings for the arms industry have been from export orders.⁴⁵ Total Israeli exports of weapons and other military products were worth nearly \$7.5 billion in 2009—about 15 per cent of Israel's total industrial goods exports, worth \$44 billion—and about the same in 2010.⁴⁶ Africa is a relatively small market for weapons, especially for the expensive advanced major weapons or components that make up a large part of Israeli arms production. However, several large deals have been signed with resource-rich countries like Angola and Nigeria.

Strategic political and military aims in Africa are gaining importance as a motivation for Israeli arms transfers

While there is little evidence of interests other than commercial for supplying weapons to African states, in general interest in military, intelligence and diplomatic ties with East African countries seems to be increasing. This time mainly to counter an emerging influence of Iran. In 2009 Avigdor Lieberman visited Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda in the first visit of an Israeli foreign minister to Africa in 20 years and reportedly the most extensive visit to Africa of any Israeli foreign minister in 50 years.⁴⁷ While Lieberman stressed Israel's willingness to assist African countries to find solutions to their problems of hunger, epidemics and lack of clean water, he also stated: 'The purpose of my visit is to demonstrate an Israeli presence in Africa. I want to tell the leaders I meet that Africa is important to Israel. We must not neglect them, especially in view of efforts by countries like Iran to influence them and establish themselves there'.⁴⁸ His small official delegation consisted of officials from the foreign, finance and defence ministries, from Foreign Defense Assistance and Defense Export Department (SIBAT) of the Israeli MOD and from the intelligence services. Representatives of Israeli arms companies made up the majority of the 20-person business delegation with him, suggesting a strong interest in developing military relations and selling arms.⁴⁹

In early 2010 Kenya was reportedly interested in buying weapons from Israel to counter what the Kenyan Internal Security Minister, George Sai-

⁴² Marshall (note 27), p. 220; Beit-Hallahmi (note 1), p. 42; and Chazan (note 36), pp. 1–3.

⁴³ Dagoni, R., 'Israel arms exports topped \$7.3b in 2010', *Globes*, 4 Apr. 2011.

⁴⁴ Katz, Y., 'Interview with Udi Shai', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 25 Aug. 2010, p. 34.

⁴⁵ Neuman, S. G., 'Power, influence, and hierarchy: defense industries in a unipolar world', ed. R. A. Bitzinger, *The Modern Defense Industry* (Praeger Press: Santa Barbara, CA, 2009), p. 63; 'Nearly \$7 billion', *Israel Defense*, Feb. 2011, p. 46; Eilam (note 42); and Dagoni (note 43).

⁴⁶ Katz (note 45); 'Nearly \$7 billion' (note 46); and Dagoni (note 43).

⁴⁷ 'A business and strategic foray', *Africa Confidential*, 25 Sep. 2009; and Melman, 'Israeli arms dealers join Lieberman's entourage to Africa' (note 5).

⁴⁸ Melman, 'Israeli arms dealers join Lieberman's entourage to Africa' (note 5).

⁴⁹ Reuters, B. R., 'Lieberman to make first trip to Africa by Israel FM in 20 years', *Ha'aretz*, 3 Sep. 2009; Melman, 'Israeli arms dealers join Lieberman's entourage to Africa' (note 5); Ronen, G., 'Lieberman leaving on African tour', *Arutz Sheva*, 1 Sep. 2009; and Brenner (note 9).



toti, characterized as an Islamist threat originating in Somalia and ‘threatening to take over Kenya and all of Africa’.⁵⁰ In March the commander of the Kenyan armed forces visited Israel to ‘strengthen the military cooperation between the two countries and examine a possible cooperation with the Israeli Defense Industries’.⁵¹ Also in March the Israeli Minister for Public Security, Yitzhak Aharonovich, paid a visit to Kenya and mentioned Kenya as a ‘critical ally’ and promised ‘much more support on the war against terrorism’, particularly on the border with Somalia.⁵² In September the heads of the Kenyan police and anti-terror unit also visited an Israeli company specializing in surveillance systems to look at ‘new technologies’.⁵³

IV. Israeli arms export controls

Israeli export controls mainly focus on concerns of potential leakage of sensitive or advanced technologies to potential adversaries, which is of little relevance for supplies to Africa. Israel recognizes the political sensitivity and the negative impact of arms exports, and this is one of the reasons why the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is involved in the arms export licensing process. However, there is no evidence of much discussion in government circles on the potential negative effects of arms deliveries and of the need for restraint regarding export control policies.⁵⁴ On the contrary, industry, high-ranking government officials and many politicians have consistently claimed that arms exports are needed for the existence and survival of the Israeli arms industry, which in turn is considered necessary for the survival of the Israeli state.⁵⁵ Until 2007, export controls lay mainly with SIBAT, which—aside from issuing the marketing, sales and export licences—also actively promotes exports, helping Israeli arms producers to access markets and sell surplus Israeli equipment.⁵⁶

In the late 1990s and early 2000s Israeli exports of advanced equipment and technology to potential adversaries of the USA led to major disagreements with the USA.⁵⁷ The main bone of contention was exports to China. Also objectionable to the USA were exports to 26 other locations designated as ‘countries of concern’. Among these 26 was one African state, Angola, which around that time reportedly received advanced intelligence equipment from Israel.⁵⁸ Under US pressure, Israel changed both its export controls and the

⁵⁰ ‘Africa’s oil wealth boosts arms sales’, UPI, 30 Apr. 2010.

⁵¹ Israel Defense Forces (IDF), ‘Commander of the Kenyan military visits Israel’, 25 Mar. 2010, Official blog of the IDF, <<http://idfspokesperson.com/2010/03/25/commander-of-the-kenyan-military-visits-israel-25-mar-2010/>>.

⁵² Momanyi, B., ‘Israel to help Kenya man porous border’, *Bankika na KCB*, 15 Mar. 2010, <<http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/Kenyanews/Israel-to-help-Kenya-man-porous-border-12059.html>>.

⁵³ Top I Vision (note 14).

⁵⁴ The role of the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, is also unclear. Issues related to arms exports are within the domain of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. However, the meetings of this committee and its protocols are almost always secret. Alon, G., ‘Talking about a secrecy revolution’, *Ha’aretz*, 28 Dec. 2004.

⁵⁵ Persico, O., ‘Arms unto the nations’, *Globes*, 5 May 2003; and Perara, V., ‘Uzi diplomacy—how Israel makes friends and enemies around the world’, *Mother Jones*, July 1985, p. 46.

⁵⁶ Ronen, G., ‘Israel is world’s fourth largest arms exporter’, *Arutz Sheva*, 13 Dec. 2007; Persico (note 57); and Eilam (note 42).

⁵⁷ Ronen (note 58); Persico (note 57); and Eilam (note 42).

⁵⁸ Opall-Rome, B., ‘Israeli firms limit sales to Chinese’, *Defense News*, 26 June 2000, pp. 4, 76; and Rodan, S., ‘USA insists that Israel limits arms exports’, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 23 Aug. 2000, pp. 20–21.



enforcement of regulations.⁵⁹ A new Defense Export Control Law came into effect on 31 December 2007, and the control lists of the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) were adopted as the national Israeli control lists.⁶⁰ The law created a new Defense Export Controls Directorate (DECD) within the MOD, separating the export control authority from SIBAT's sales supporting role.⁶¹ The new regulations also tightened controls on Israeli residents and Israeli companies brokering weapons not originating from Israel. Under these new regulations, such brokers need to have marketing and sales permits, even if the weapons do not originate in or transit through Israel. Since 2008 Israeli law has forbidden payment of bribes by Israeli residents to foreign officials to gain business, following Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) rules on corruption.⁶²

Under US pressure, Israel changed both its export controls and the enforcement of regulations

Under the Defense Export Control Law, the consultation process for export licences formally includes the MOD, the MFA and the law enforcement agencies. As it was before 2008, the MOD continues to have the most pronounced influence on the arms export decisions.⁶³ It issues, via DECD and SIBAT, the actual marketing, sales and export licences.⁶⁴ However, Lieberman's visit to Africa in 2009 seemed to reveal some dissonance on African trade policies between the MFA on the one hand and the MOD and the arms industry on the other when Haim Dibon, deputy director general of the Israeli MFA, stated that 'There is no doubt that the most important need of Africa is countering hunger and the shortage of water, and not arms'.⁶⁵ Earlier disagreement had been reported over deals with the authoritarian regime of Equatorial Guinea.⁶⁶

Israel officially claims that its arms export policy 'puts several major restrictions and prohibitions' on arms transfers, even adhering to the export control regimes it does not participate in and prohibiting exports to non-state actors and to 'subversive and underground groups'. It also prohibits transfers to places 'where there is imminent risk that arms might be internally diverted, illegally proliferated and re-transferred or fall into the hands of terrorists or entities and states that support or sponsor them'.⁶⁷ However,

⁵⁹ Dagoni, R., 'US, Israel sign MOU on arms exports to sensitive markets', *Globes*, 17 Aug. 2005.

⁶⁰ Defense Export Control Law, 5766-2007 of October 2007. Presentation of the director of the DECD, Eli Pincu, on Israeli Defense Export Control at the US-Israel High Technology Forum, 9 Sep. 2008. Israel is not a member of the Wassenaar Arrangement or the MTCR. The Wassenaar control lists can be found at the website of the Wassenaar Arrangement <<http://www.wassenaar.org/controllists/index.html>>. The MTCR control lists can be found at the website of the MTCR <<http://www.mtcr.info/english/annex.html>>.

⁶¹ SIBAT, <<http://www.sibat.mod.gov.il/sibatmain/sibat/index.html>>.

⁶² In July 2008 Israel modified national law to include bribery of a foreign official as a crime and in March 2009 ratified the OECD Convention on Combatting Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. OECD, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/28/33/44324083.pdf>>; and Melman (note 37).

⁶³ Melman, 'Why did Lieberman really go to Africa?' (note 5); and Melman, Y., 'Lieberman used Africa trip to lay groundwork for arms deals', *Ha'aretz*, 11 Sep. 2009. For dual-use goods, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour is also involved.

⁶⁴ Ronen (note 58); and Persico (note 57).

⁶⁵ Melman, 'Why did Lieberman really go to Africa?' (note 5); and Brenner (note 9).

⁶⁶ 'Israeli arms companies target Third World', UPI, 8 Apr. 2011.

⁶⁷ Israel report to the UNROCA for 2009 (note 3).



Little is publicly known about Israel's enforcement of its arms export regulations

concerns about the misuse of weapons by undemocratic regimes seem to play, at best, a limited role in the licensing process. When asked in 1997 if human rights are considered in export decisions, David Ivri, an adviser to the Israeli MOD, stated that 'Israel to this day has a policy of not intervening in the internal matters of any country in the world. We don't like it when others interfere in our internal matters. For this reason, our policy doesn't touch on such matters'.⁶⁸ However, this position seems to have shifted over the years, and Israel has shown some willingness to consider potential negative impacts of Israeli arms deliveries on operations by other states in Africa. In November 2004 Israel suspended sales to the government of Côte d'Ivoire after France requested it so. However, the suspension came only after several French peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire had been killed in attacks by Ivorian Government aircraft and just a week before the UN imposed an arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire. A French request from two months earlier asking Israel to stop sales had been ignored.⁶⁹ French pressure on the Israeli MFA was also reportedly the reason why an Israeli company ceased training Guinean armed forces in 2008.⁷⁰ In a statement in reaction to reported exports to Guinea after the September 2009 massacre of civilian protestors by government forces, the Israeli MOD claimed that exports of equipment and training would also be denied to countries with questionable human rights records.⁷¹

Little is publicly known about Israel's enforcement of its arms export regulations. The 2007 law includes options to punish violations with large fines or prison sentences of several years. The only known case of punishment for evading export regulations was when Global CST was reportedly fined \$25 000 in 2010 (see above). However, the details of the case and the punishment are unclear, and a spokesman for the Israeli MOD stated in relation to the case that the ministry does not comment on issues relating to defence exports and its methods of supervising them.⁷²

Israel's policies on recipients who break end-use or end-user agreements are also unclear. In the clearest case of illegal diversion, rifles supplied by Israel to Chad quickly ended up in the hands of rebels in Darfur. When asked by the UN panel monitoring the UN sanctions on Darfur about the weapons, Israel provided details on the original shipment of the weapons, but the diversion's impact on Israeli export licensing practices or its relation with Chad remained unclear.⁷³

⁶⁸ Turner, M., 'Arming the occupation: Israel and the arms trade', Campaign Against the Arms Trade, Oct. 2002, <<http://www.caat.org.uk/resources/publications/countries/israel-1002.php>>.

⁶⁹ Melman, Y., 'Defense Ministry halts arms sales to Ivory Coast', *Ha'aretz*, 9 Nov. 2004; and Brenner (note 9). A later model Galil rifle has been identified in use in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010. Picture on Military Photos Forum, 29 Mar. 2011 (note 16).

⁷⁰ Katz (note 30).

⁷¹ Heller (note 31).

⁷² Heller (note 31); Melman (note 30); and Katz (note 30).

⁷³ United Nations (note 22).



V. The impact of Israeli arms on conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa

Although Israeli arms supplies to sub-Saharan Africa are small, they can play a significant role in armed conflicts or human rights abuses in the region. While there are no clear cases where deliveries of Israeli weapons alone have played the main or decisive role in such conflicts or abuses, in several cases they are clearly important. A typical example is the supply of RAM-2000 light armoured vehicles, rifles and other military equipment, probably including electronic surveillance systems from Israel to Chad between 2005 and 2008.⁷⁴ These weapons were used in the internal conflict in Chad that erupted in late 2005; the conflict ended in 2010 with a government victory, boosted by arms supplies from several countries.

Ugandan armed forces may have used some artillery supplied by Israel in its ongoing conflict with the rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). During joint DRC–Uganda operations in late 2008 against the LRA, Ugandan MiG-21 combat aircraft were used.⁷⁵ These aircraft had been modernized in Israel in 2003 and the pilots trained by Israelis.⁷⁶

Much less visible is the impact of Israeli surveillance and other electronic systems. Generally, these systems are seen as significant force multipliers in conflict, including against armed rebel groups. Deliveries of UAVs, USVs and other surveillance systems have been mentioned as important for the success of operations during 2007–10 by the Nigerian armed forces against the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).⁷⁷ In Angola, Israeli-supplied UAVs are used to provide security for a private oil company in Cabinda, a region responsible for a significant part of Angola's wealth that has an active armed rebel movement.⁷⁸ The Ugandan Government reportedly also operates a light aircraft fitted with advanced Israeli electro-optical surveillance equipment, probably for use against the LRA.⁷⁹ In one case the use of Israeli UAVs in a conflict is clearly documented. In November 2004 French peacekeeping forces in Côte d'Ivoire came under air attack from government forces shortly after a UAV had been observed flying over their positions. Israel had supplied these UAVs barely six months earlier, when the conflict was already ongoing, and Israelis were suspected to be involved in operating the vehicles.⁸⁰

Israeli arms supplies to and training of presidential guards and special forces in several African states, such as Equatorial Guinea and Guinea (see above), can also be linked to conflict and abuses.

⁷⁴ For Israeli and other arms supplies to Chad, see also Wezeman, P. D., 'Arms flows to the conflict in Chad', SIPRI Background Paper, SIPRI, Aug. 2009, <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=389>.

⁷⁵ US Department of State, 'Northern Uganda', <<http://northernuganda.usvpp.gov/securityupdate.html>>; and Paterno, S., 'The Uganda LRA allowed to plunder', *Sudan Tribune*, 13 Feb. 2009.

⁷⁶ Izama, A., Butagira, T. and Matsiko, G., 'A month later; mission remains incomplete', *Daily Monitor* (Kampala), 14 Jan. 2009; and 'Garamba air raid: Maruru speaks out', *The Independent*, 22 Jan. 2009.

⁷⁷ Tov (note 7).

⁷⁸ 'Israel and the rise of drone warfare', Neged Neshek, n.d., <<http://www.negedneshek.org/exports/uavs/israel-and-the-rise-of-drone-warfare/>>.

⁷⁹ Egozi, 'Israel's Innocon responds to Ugandan UAV request' (note 12).

⁸⁰ 'Ivory Coast air force wiped out', *Air Forces Monthly*, Jan. 2005, pp. 4–5; and Brenner (note 9).



The use of Israeli weapons has not been restricted to use by the originally intended recipients. For example, as mentioned above, some of the rifles supplied to Chad were found a year later in the hands of Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel forces operating in the Darfur region of Sudan, which was at that time covered by a UN arms embargo. It has been widely reported that the Chadian Government supported JEM, but it remains unclear if the Chadian Government delivered the weapons to the rebels or if the rebels acquired them without government approval.⁸¹

VI. Conclusions

Compared with total Israeli arms exports, Israel's exports of weapons and training to sub-Saharan Africa are limited. However, given that total arms flows (from all suppliers) to Africa are limited in volume, Israeli weapons and trainers observed in numerous African trouble spots may play a bigger role than their quantities imply. Israeli Government policies on supplies to the region are unclear, but they appear to be aimed at generating sales for Israel's arms industry and at developing ties with several strategically located countries.

The commercial aspect is an important driver for Israel's arms sales. The Israeli arms industry is extremely export dependent, and maintaining the industry is considered vital for both Israel's economy and security. While the arms exports of many other large arms producers account for a larger part of the production of the arms industry than production for the domestic market, the difference between Israeli exports and domestic consumption is extreme. Even if the African market for arms is not very big on the global scale or on the national scale for Israel, several larger deals have been won by Israeli companies, and there is potential for further large sales, especially in resource-rich countries that have already bought Israeli weapons in the past few years and that are likely to modernize their armed forces.⁸² Israel's willingness to supply regimes with questionable legitimacy or human rights records certainly strengthens the competitiveness of Israeli companies.

Developing military ties, particularly to those countries that are strategically located, is a second driver for Israeli arms sales to several African countries. Arms supplies to, for example, states in East Africa play a role in maintaining friendly relations as well as in strengthening Israel-friendly states against what Israel sees as a mainly Iran-supported policies against Israel.

Israeli arms transfers to Africa illustrate the need to include smaller suppliers and issues such as training and intelligence systems in discussions on controls of the arms trade—which tend to focus on major weapons, SALW and ammunition—in order to address the possible negative effects of arms supplies to Africa.

The commercial aspect is an important driver for Israel's arms sales

⁸¹ United Nations (note 22).

⁸² 'Africa's oil wealth boosts arms sales' (note 51).



ABBREVIATIONS

DECD	Defense Export Controls Directorate
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
SIBAT	Foreign Defense Assistance and Defense Export Department
IAI	Israel Aerospace Industries
IMI	Israel Military Industries
IWI	Israel Weapon Industries
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SALW	small arms and light weapons
UN	United Nations
UNROCA	United Nations Register of Conventional Arms
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
USV	unmanned surface vehicle

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SIPRI BACKGROUND PAPER

ISRAELI ARMS TRANSFERS TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

SIEMON T. WEZEMAN

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