

7 May 2025

EXPOSING UK ARMS EXPORTS TO ISRAEL



Workers ♣ for a 🕯 Free ♣ Palestine



Executive Summary

From October 2023 to March 2025, **the UK sent thousands of military goods to Israel.** Evidence suggests that these shipments are ongoing.

Using new data from the Israel Tax Authority, this report highlights a wide range of shipments of military goods, munitions of war, arms, and aircraft parts from the UK to Israel since the war on Gaza began. It also finds evidence that the pattern of UK-Israel courier shipments of aircraft parts is unchanged despite the official ban on direct F-35 component exports in September 2024.

The data show shipments of military goods, munitions of war, and arms or arms parts falling under classifications of:

- 'Bombs, Grenades, Torpedoes, Mines, Missiles And Similar Munitions Of War And Parts Thereof'
- 'Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols'
- 'Parts and accessories of shotguns and rifles'
- 'Rocket launchers; flame-throwers; grenade launchers; torpedo tubes and similar projectors'
- 'Tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles, motorised whether or not fitted with weapons, and parts of such vehicles'

This includes a shipment of 150,000 bullets to Israel in October 2023.

Shipments of aircraft parts to Israel have remained consistent throughout the war on Gaza. Even after the UK government's opaque suspension of some licences covering components for military aircraft in September 2024, the data show no observable decrease in the shipment of aircraft parts.

Direct shipments of F-35 parts from the UK to Israel between October 2023 and August 2024, previously confirmed by the UK government, are observed in the data analysed in this report. **Despite the September 2024 suspension of direct shipments of F-35 components from the UK to Israel, the data suggest such shipments are ongoing as of March 2025.**

Foreign Secretary David Lammy has stated in the House of Commons that 'much of what we send [to Israel] is defensive in nature. It is not what we describe routinely as arms' and asserted that he '[does] not think anyone would suggest that we should not sell a helmet

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or goggles to one of our closest allies. However, the evidence outlined in this report shows that, since October 2023, the UK has sent thousands of goods to Israel which are defined as arms and ammunition and go far beyond helmets and goggles – proving that David Lammy's suggestion that UK exports are not what would be routinely described as arms is untrue and misleading.³

This report shows the extent of ongoing exports of arms to Israel, amounting to thousands of military goods since October 2023, including **over 8,000 separate munitions since the government's partial suspension of export licences** in September 2024. On the basis of the evidence in this report it appears that David Lammy has misled Parliament and the public about arms shipments to Israel.

David Lammy, Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds, and other ministers have also repeatedly claimed that the government has ended direct exports of parts for F-35 jets to Israel since the partial arms export suspension was introduced in September 2024.⁴ When announcing the suspension, the government admitted that shipping components for F-35 jets directly to Israel would present a 'clear risk' of contributing to Israel's violations of international law.⁵

However, the evidence suggests that **direct shipments of F-35 components from the UK to Israel have been ongoing despite the suspensions.** By the government's own admission, this would put the government at 'clear risk' of enabling Israel's violations of international law and therefore violating UK obligations under international law.

Ministers have misled the public and parliament, the government has failed to be transparent, and the UK is not upholding its obligations under international law. The UK government must release a complete account of these shipments that permits a thorough investigation of UK arms traffic to Israel.

^{1 &#}x27;Hansard - Middle East Volume 755', UK Parliament (28 October 2024).

^{2 &#}x27;Hansard - Middle East Volume 753', UK Parliament (2 September 2024).

^{3 &#}x27;Arms and ammunition' are defined as Chapter 93 of the World Customs Organisation's Harmonised System, widely subscribed to internationally including by the UK and Israel. Neither helmets nor goggles would fall under this chapter.

⁴ See for example 'UK suspends around 30 arms export licences to Israel for use in Gaza over International Humanitarian Law concerns', Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Department for Business and Trade, The Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP and The Rt Hon David Lammy MP (2 September 2024); 'Statement from the Secretary of State for Business and Trade', UK Parliament (2 September 2024); 'Hansard – Israel and Palestine Volume 759', UK Parliament (16 December 2024); 'Israel: F-35 Aircraft – Question for Ministry of Defence', UK Parliament (29 November 2024).

^{5 &#}x27;UK suspends around 30 arms export licences to Israel for use in Gaza over International Humanitarian Law concerns', as above.

Methodology

Researchers with the Palestinian Youth Movement, Progressive International, and Workers for a Free Palestine reviewed import data published by the Israel Tax Authority (ITA) covering the period from October 2023 to March 2025.⁶ This data was supplemented by licensing data published by the UK's Export Control Joint Unit (ECJU) of the Department for Business and Trade (DBT).⁷ This section describes these datasets and outlines how they are utilised in the report.

Import Data

The ITA regularly publishes a list of its imports organised by eight-digit customs codes. The first six digits of these codes are based on the World Customs Organisation's Harmonised System, while the last two digits are specific to Israeli import policy. The Israeli customs book for imports was used to classify these specific customs codes. These digits indicate the classification of a good, increasing in specificity with each number.

We searched for imports with customs codes starting with 93, which indicates arms and ammunition. We excluded from this the code 93032000, covering 'sporting, hunting and target-shooting rifles', and the code 93070000, covering 'swords, cutlasses, bayonets, lances and similar arms and parts thereof and scabbards and sheaths therefor.' We also searched for shipments of customs code 87100000, which covers 'Tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles, motorised, whether fitted with weapons, and parts of such vehicles.' To identify aircraft parts, we searched for shipments beginning with customs code 88, covering 'aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof.'

We removed all shipments designated by 'Government Procedure Type' for personal use, listed as 'Home Use Imports.' We identified courier shipments specified by 'Government Procedure Type' as 'Commercial Use – Courier.' The value of shipments is in Israeli New Shekels (NIS). For each shipment we convert this value to Sterling (GBP) using the average exchange rate during the month of that shipment.⁹

The import data identify the country of origin with ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 codes, which was used to identify goods shipped from the UK to Israel. It also specifies the month and year of shipments, enabling us to examine imports from October 2023 to March 2025. It does not specify the sender or receiver of shipments.

The import data also specify the 'Customs House' where particular shipments arrive, enabling the distinction between air and sea shipments.

^{6 &#}x27;Statistics on the import of goods to Israel', Israel Tax Authority (March 2025).

^{7 &#}x27;Strategic export controls: licensing data', Export Control Joint Unit (September 2025).

^{8 &#}x27;Israel Customs Book for import', Israel Tax Authority (April 2025).

⁹ We sourced historical Israeli New Shekel to Great British Pound exchange rates from https://www.exchange-rates.org/exchange-rates.

Licensing Data

For the sections on military aircraft, we identified shipments' relevant licensing by looking at reports published by the ECJU. These reports provide data about decisions made on licence applications by companies seeking to export military or controlled goods from the UK. While this process is limited due to roughly 15% of licensing data no longer being publicly available, the records provide partial details about the export of military goods to Israel.¹⁰

We identified Strategic Export Licences issued by the UK government that align with categories of goods appearing in the ITA import data.

Challenges

Trade data in the UK is opaque, without publicly available bills of lading or air waybills and with the use of suppression of customs codes for certain exports. Specific consignees, shippers, product descriptions, and ports of origin are impossible to access without bill of lading or air waybill data.

The nature of customs codes also poses a challenge. Part of the UK's support for foreign militaries comes in the form of aircraft parts, electronic equipment, intelligence, training, and R&D partnerships. Consequently, military goods exported to Israel often fall under customs codes that can include both military and non-military goods. Based solely on the Israeli import data, there is also the possibility that some goods are being re-exported to other countries for a different end-user.

¹⁰ Since early 2023 the UK government stores roughly 15% of export licence data in the LITE database which is not public, unlike the preexisting SPIRE system which is publicly searchable. See 'UK Export Licence Data', Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT).

11 'Suppressions policy', UK Trade Info.

^{12 &#}x27;Defence and Security Industrial Strategy', Ministry of Defence (26 March 2021).

Key Findings

Military Goods and Munitions of War

ITA import data indicate that 14 shipments of military items were made from the UK to Israel since October 2023. The data show that at least 11 shipments by air to Ben Gurion Airport and one maritime delivery to Haifa carried over 160,000 items from the UK to Israel.

Most of these shipments occurred after the UK government's suspension of around 30 arms export licences to Israel in September 2024. The data show that **the UK has sent 8,630 separate munitions since the suspensions took effect**, all in the category 'Bombs, Grenades, Torpedoes, Mines, Missiles And Similar Munitions Of War And Parts Thereof – Other'.

Evidence also shows the UK shipped 150,000 bullets to Israel in October 2023.

In addition to weapons and ammunition, evidence shows six shipments of 299 items under customs code 87100000, which the ITA identifies as 'Tanks and other armored fighting vehicles, motorised, whether or not fitted with weapons, and parts of such vehicles.'

The following table summarises shipments of military goods and munitions of war made from the UK to Israel from October 2023 to March 2025.

Customs Code	Description	Quantity	Number of Shipments	Approximate Total Value (GBP)
87100000	Tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles, motorised, whether or not fitted with weapons, and parts of such vehicles.	299	6	135,782.22
93012000	Rocket launchers; flame-throwers; grenade launchers; torpedo tubes and similar projectors	150	2	86,544.38
93069010	Bombs, Grenades, Torpedoes, Mines, Missiles And Similar Munitions Of War And Parts Thereof – Bullets	150,000	1	94,728.37
93069090	Bombs, Grenades, Torpedoes, Mines, Missiles And Similar Munitions Of War And Parts Thereof – Other	9,631	5	204,666.04

Table 1. Total quantity of imports in the 87100000, 93012000, 93069010, and 93069090 categories from October 2023 to March 2025 (inclusive).

Below, we give a chronological breakdown of these shipments showing their quantity, when they arrived, and their approximate value.

Customs Code	Year	Month	Quantity	Arrival Port	Approximate Value (GBP)
93069090	2025	2	2,102	Ben Gurion Airport	68,538.80
93069090	2025	1	1,500	Ben Gurion Airport	1,700.62
87100000	2025	1	4	Ben Gurion Airport	1,741.65
87100000	2025	1	2	Ben Gurion Airport	2,121.58
87100000	2024	12	42	Ben Gurion Airport	2,478.78
93069090	2024	11	4,500	Ben Gurion Airport	5,087.34
87100000	2024	10	68	Ben Gurion Airport	4,994.80
93069090	2024	9	528	Ben Gurion Airport	97,436.24
87100000	2024	5	155	Haifa	123,432.39
93012000	2024	4	100	Ben Gurion Airport	57,229.31
87100000	2024	1	28	Ben Gurion Airport	1,013.03
93012000	2023	12	50	Ben Gurion Airport	29,315.08
93069090	2023	11	1,001	Ben Gurion Airport	31,903.05
93069010	2023	10	150,000	Ben Gurion Airport	94,728.37

Table 2. Calendar of shipments in the 87100000, 93012000, 93069010, 93069090 categories from October 2023 to March 2025 (inclusive).

All Other Arms

ITA import records include shipments to Israel that, while falling under customs codes not explicitly classified as military, warrant closer examination. We looked at other shipments categorised as arms and ammunition, filtering out those specifically for 'sporting, hunting, or target-shooting shotguns.' The data show **four shipments of 340 items in the category of 'parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols' and two shipments of 27 items in the category of 'parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles.'**

The following table outlines these shipments from October 2023 to March 2025.

Customs Code	Description	Quantity	Number of Shipments	Approximate Total Value (GBP)
93051000	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols	340	4	49,926.70
93052000	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles	27	2	6,454.85

Table 3. Total quantity of imports in the 93051000 and 93052000 categories from October 2023 to March 2025 (inclusive).

Below, we lay out the calendar of shipments for these goods.

Customs Code	Year	Month	Quantity	Arrival Port	Approximate Value (GBP)
93052000	2024	10	26	Ben Gurion Airport	2,960.26
93051000	2024	10	20	Ben Gurion Airport	5,211.98
93051000	2024	9	150	Ben Gurion Airport	21,552.46
93052000	2024	4	1	Ben Gurion Airport	3,494.59
93051000	2024	4	50	Ben Gurion Airport	2,012.59
93051000	2024	3	120	Ben Gurion Airport	21,149.67

Table 4. Calendar of shipments in the 93051000 and 93052000 categories from October 2023 to March 2025 (inclusive).

Aircraft Parts and Transparency Concerns

This section looks at shipments of aircraft parts since October 2023. This category demands consideration, as aircraft parts account for a significant part of UK support for the Israeli military.¹³ However, customs codes for aircraft parts do not distinguish between military and non-military goods. With this limitation in mind, we present evidence that suggests **the** frequency of shipments of aircraft items from the UK to Israel has not been affected by the licence suspensions announced last year.

In September 2024, the Labour government suspended around 30 licences that they stated posed a 'clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law (IHL)' in Gaza.¹⁴ As of December 2024, 16 of the UK's 368 strategic export control licences to Israel were suspended.¹⁵ Of the 352 non-suspended licences extant, 161 of them were military.¹⁶

While the government did not make clear which licences were suspended, officials stated that several of the suspended licences were related to military aircraft.¹⁷ At the same time, many of the 161 extant licences likely relate to aircraft components because the plurality of military licences issued over at least the past five years have been for aircraft parts.¹⁸ This does not include the Open General Export Licence for the F-35, which is also used to export military aircraft parts.¹⁹ In any case, one would expect an observable decrease in shipments of aircraft parts following the licence suspensions.

¹³ From January 2020 to September 2024, 345 of 1,651 issued military licences were for Aircraft, Helicopters, and Drones – more than any other category. See 'UK export licences approved for military goods to Israel since 2015', CAAT. These are not comprehensive of military aircraft component exports as the F-35, which is according to CAAT 'almost certainly the single largest and most important part of the UK arms trade with Israel,' is not covered by those licences. See 'The UK's partial suspension of arms export licences to Israel, and the F-35 exemption: a briefing', CAAT (October 2024).

^{14 &#}x27;Israel export control licensing data: 6 December 2024', Export Control Joint Unit (10 December 2024).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ In a Business and Trade Committee meeting on UK arms exports to Israel, the Chair stated that suspended licences included 'components for combat aircraft, military transport aircraft, military helicopters, targeting equipment, combat naval vessels, unmanned aerial vehicles, and technology for military goods.' See 'Business and Trade Committee Oral evidence: UK arms exports to Israel, HC 548', UK Parliament (10 December 2024).

¹⁸ See footnote 9.

^{19 &#}x27;The UK's partial suspension of arms export licences to Israel, and the F-35 exemption: a briefing', CAAT (October 2024).

However, when analysing import data, we found **no indication that shipments of aircraft** parts from the UK to Israel have been affected by the suspensions.

Below is a table summarising shipments between October 2023 and March 2025 of goods that fall under the customs code 88, which describes 'aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof.' We examined the frequency of shipments of aircraft parts in this period.

Customs Code	Description	Quantity	Number of Shipments	Approximate Total Value (GBP)
88040019	Parachutes (including dirigible parachutes and paragliders) and rotochutes; parts thereof and accessories thereto.	323	8	499,084.89
88040090	Parachutes (including dirigible parachutes and paragliders) and rotochutes; parts thereof and accessories thereto Other	12.5	5	3,593.89
88071000	Propellers and rotors and parts thereof	893	6	95,450.52
88072000	Under-carriages and parts thereof	868	15	7,505,601.25
88073000	Other parts of aeroplanes, helicopters or unmanned aircraft	9,725.20	190	8,750,195.77
88079000	Other	8.5	1	12,274.91

Table 5. Total quantity of imports in the 88 category from October 2023 to March 2025 (inclusive).

This analysis reveals that there has been **no observable decrease in shipments made since September 2024,** as shown in the graph below.

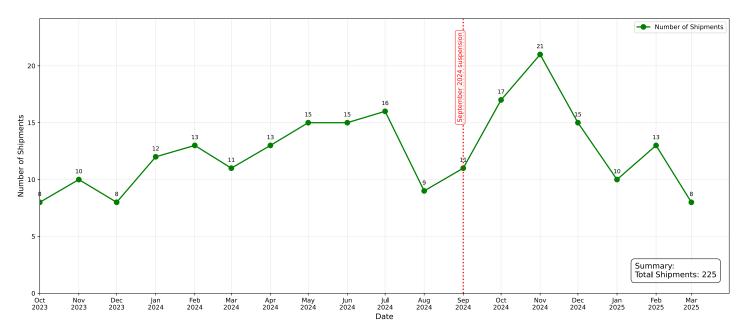


Figure 1. Number of shipments per month of category 88 goods between October 2023 and March 2025 (inclusive). The vertical dotted red line marks September 2024; the UK government announced licence suspensions on 2 September 2024.

When we performed a statistical test to check that there was no decrease, we in fact found a small but statistically significant increase in the number of shipments following the suspension.²⁰

While we cannot conclusively say that these shipments are of military aircraft or military aircraft components, these trends are concerning. The UK government must release transparent and complete licensing and export data to clarify the nature of these goods, and a full investigation of these shipments is required.

F-35 Parts and Courier Shipments

The UK produces F-35 parts and ships parts to F-35 users around the world as part of global sustainment of the F-35 supply chain.²¹ In the announcement of licence suspensions in September 2024, the government made a specific exemption for F-35 components despite the extensive use of F-35s by Israel to bomb Gaza.²² The only amendment made to the F-35 Open General Export Licence was that components can no longer be sent directly to Israel from the UK.²³ This was reiterated in November when the Minister of State said there have been no further F-35 parts exported directly from RAF Marham to Israel since this licensing decision.²⁴ However, new evidence suggests that the UK has continued to send direct shipments of F-35 components to Israel after September 2024 and that these shipments are ongoing as of March 2025.

Research by *Declassified UK* and *The Ditch* previously led to confirmation of **14 direct shipments of F-35 parts from the UK to Israel before the licensing decision, between October 2023 and August 2024.**²⁵ This research showed that courier shipments – which are made for small quantities of sensitive cargo – of F-35 parts were made from RAF Marham via London Heathrow Airport to Tel Aviv by El Al Airlines.²⁶ These parts were sent by Lockheed Martin UK from RAF Marham to Nevatim air base. Lockheed Martin UK is contracted by the UK Ministry of Defence for the F-35 Global Asset Management (GAM) solution to provide sustainment to F-35 partners for spare parts from a warehouse in RAF Marham.²⁷ Additionally, courier shipments for the F-35 program have been made by FedEx Express from the US to Israel, and have been used by the US Transportation Command for sustainment of the F-35 program via FedEx and UPS since 2022.^{28,29}

²⁰ We performed a Wilcoxon rank-sum test with a null hypothesis that the number of shipments per month before and after the suspension are drawn from the same distribution, and an alternative hypothesis that the number of shipments after the suspension are greater than before.

^{21 &#}x27;UK chosen as a global F-35 repair hub', Ministry of Defence (17 November 2016)

^{22 &#}x27;The UK's partial suspension of arms export licences to Israel, and the F-35 exemption: a briefing', CAAT (October 2024). Note the licence still allows components to be eventually exported to Israel provided they go via another country.

^{23 &#}x27;Open General Export Licence: Exports in Support of Joint Strike Fighter (F-35 Lightning II) – September 2024', Department for Business and Trade (2 September 2024). The amended licence includes the new stipulation that goods can be exported to partner nations and export customers 'other than Israel' in section 4(2). This licence includes a loophole, unacknowledged in the announcement of the amendment and subsequent references to it in parliament, that allows the UK to continue exporting F-35 components to Israel 'as long as the goods, software or technology will be re-exported to one of the other countries or destinations' listed in the licence.

^{24 &#}x27;Israel: F-35 Aircraft - Question for Ministry of Defence', UK Parliament (29 November 2024).

^{25 &#}x27;F-35 components sent to Israel from UK airbase 14 times', Declassified UK (2 December 2024).

^{26 &#}x27;F-35 components sent to Israel from Royal Air Force base', Declassified UK (31 October 2024).

^{27 &#}x27;Award: Global Asset Management (GAM) - Find a Tender', Ministry of Defence (3 February 2025).

^{28 &#}x27;IDF munitions still being illegally transported over Ireland – by a new airline, FedEx Express', The Ditch (4 October 2024).

^{29 &#}x27;DLA expanding DOD visibility of F-35 supply chain', Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) (17 November 2022).

As such, there is an established pattern of the use of courier shipments for small shipments of F-35 spare parts.

In our analysis of the shipment of aircraft parts in the section above, we noted a small fraction of shipments that had been made with the 'Government Procedure Type' of 'Commercial Import - Courier.' We noted exactly 14 courier shipments from the UK between October 2023 and August 2024 in the ITA import data, meaning the confirmed direct shipments of F-35 parts in that period can be observed in the data.³⁰ We also reviewed cargo documents accessed by *Declassified UK* and *The Ditch* for seven of these flights confirmed to have been carrying F-35 parts shipments directly to Israel, and found that the weights of these shipments were consistent with the courier shipments identified in ITA import data.

The customs codes represented in these courier flights are shown below followed by a breakdown of shipments by month.

Customs Code	Description	Quantity	Number of Shipments	Approximate Total Value (GBP)
88073000	Other parts of aeroplanes, helicopters or unmanned aircraft	33.8	13	4,294.04
88040090	Parachutes (including dirigible parachutes and paragliders) and rotochutes; parts thereof and accessories thereto Other	1	1	50.15

Table 6. Total quantity of courier shipments between October 2023 and August 2024 (exclusive) totaling 14 shipments.

³⁰ The parliamentary statement confirming 14 transfers does not specify whether the months of October 2023 and August 2024 are included in this count. There are exactly 14 shipments in the import data between October 2023 and August 2024, excluding the months of October and August. If those months are included, this would bring the count to 17 entries in the import data.

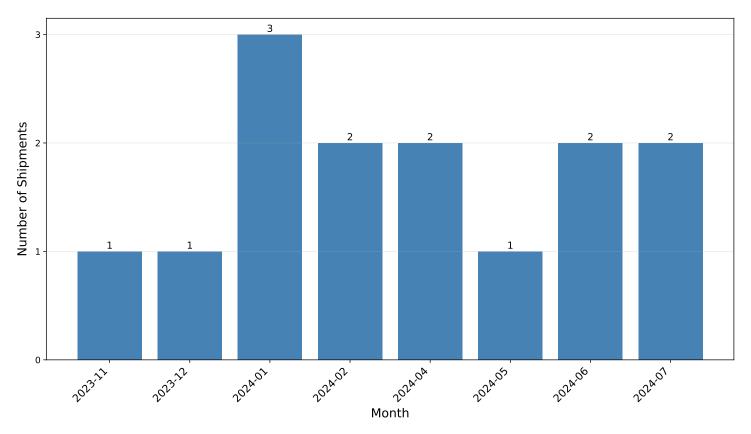


Figure 2. Courier Shipments by month of the 88 category from October 2023 and August 2024 (exclusive).

The customs codes represented in the courier flights since September 2024 are shown below, followed by a breakdown of shipments by month. It is likely given the customs codes and courier status that these are F-35 parts being exported from the UK to Israel. However, it cannot be confirmed whether they are for maintenance and repair of the current Israeli F-35I fleet at Nevatim Airbase, as in the *Declassified UK* report, or are intermediary components for eventual re-export to the global F-35 supply chain. In either case, these parts can and do ultimately end up in Israeli F-35s.

Customs Cod	de Description	Quantity	Number of Shipments	Approximate Total Value (GBP)
88073000	Other parts of aeroplanes, helicopters or unmanned aircraft	43.6	11	3,642.65
88040090	Parachutes (including dirigible parachutes and paragliders) and rotochutes; parts thereof and accessories thereto Other	2	1	30.43
88071000	Propellers, rotors and parts thereof	1	1	155.93

Table 7. Total quantity of courier shipments in the 88 category after September 2024.

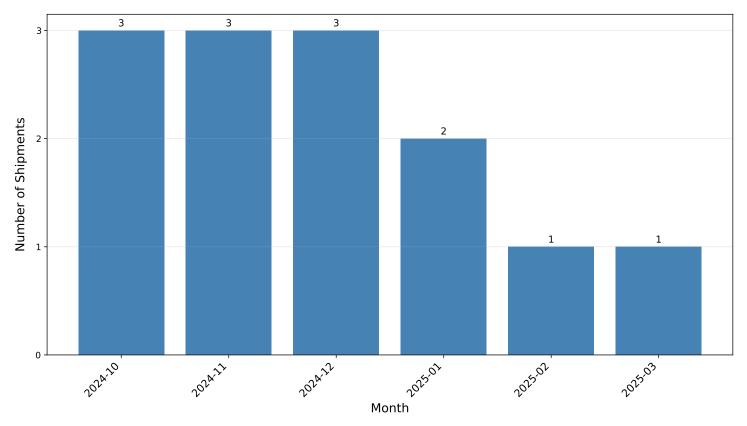


Figure 3. Courier shipments by month of the 88 category after September 2024.

Crucially, these courier shipments have continued beyond September 2024 and are ongoing as of March 2025. While we cannot conclusively say that these shipments are of F-35 parts, the UK government must release complete details of these shipments and a full investigation is required.

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Research compiled by the Palestinian Youth Movement, Workers for a Free Palestine, and Progressive International

The Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) is a transnational, independent, grassroots movement of Palestinian and Arab youth struggling for the liberation of our homeland

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