

- [Campaigns](#)
- [Library](#)
- [For Media](#)

[Logo](#) [Skip to main content](#)

- [اللغة العربية](#)
- [Français](#)
- [Español](#)

[Register](#) | [Login](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Who We Are](#)
- [How You Can Help](#)
- [Learn About Human Rights](#)
- [News](#)
- [Stay Informed](#)



- [Features](#)
- [News](#)
- [Good news](#)
- [Reports](#)
- [Video and audio](#)

- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [US munitions delivered to Israel](#)

US munitions delivered to Israel



Phosphorous shell cases found in Khuza'a, Gaza, 24 January 2009

© Amnesty International



Lumps of still smouldering white phosphorus found in Gaza City

© Amnesty International



Amnesty International fact-finding team investigates white phosphorus use in Gaza City

© Amnesty International

2 April 2009

A massive consignment of US munitions was delivered to Israel in recent weeks, according to information revealed by Amnesty International. The organization received information that the Wehr Elbe, a German cargo ship, chartered and controlled by US Military Sealift Command, docked and unloaded its cargo of reportedly over 300 containers at the Israeli port of Ashdod, just 40km north of Gaza by road on 22 March.

The German ship left the USA for Israel on 20 December, one week before the start of Israeli attacks on Gaza. It was carrying 989 containers of munitions, each of them 20 feet long with a total estimated net weight of 14,000 tons.

Asked about the Wehr Elbe, a Pentagon spokesperson confirmed to Amnesty International that "the unloading of the entire US munitions shipment was successfully completed at Ashdod [Israel] on 22 March". The spokesperson said that the shipment was destined for a US pre-positioned ammunition stockpile in Israel. Under a US-Israel agreement,

munitions from this stockpile may be transferred for Israeli use if necessary.

Some of the white phosphorus artillery shells that Israeli forces fired into densely populated residential areas in Gaza last January, killing and injuring scores of Palestinian civilians, were from US-made stockpiles – as clearly indicated by the marking (M825 A1). Other white phosphorus artillery shells were also US-made, as were the overwhelming majority of the other munitions used by Israeli forces to commit grave violations of international law in the recent three-week conflict in Gaza.

Another US official told Amnesty International that the US authorities are reviewing Israel's use of US weapons during the Gaza conflict to see if Israel complied with US law, but no conclusion has yet been reached.

In the meantime, Palestinian civilians continue to die of wounds sustained in Israeli attacks last January. Two days ago Ghada Abu Halima, who had sustained deep burns from a white phosphorus attack on 4 January, died of her wounds. The attack had killed her husband's father and four young siblings, including a one-year-old girl, and had severely injured her, her mother-in-law and several other children in the family.

Amnesty International said that the delivery should have been stopped and that failure to do so throws into question whether President Obama will act to prevent US weapons from fuelling conflicts and contributing to attacks against civilians that may amount to war crimes, as were perpetrated in Gaza.

"Legally and morally, this US arms shipment should have been halted by the Obama administration given the extent of the evidence showing how military equipment and munitions of this kind were recently used by the Israeli forces to commit war crimes," said Brian Wood. "Arms supplies in these circumstances are contrary to provisions in US law.

"There is a great risk that the new munitions may be used by the Israeli military to commit further violations of international law, like the ones committed during the war in Gaza. We are urging all governments to impose an immediate and comprehensive suspension of arms to Israel, and to all Palestinian armed groups until there is no longer a substantial risk of serious human rights violations."

The US was by far the largest supplier of weapons to Israel between 2004 and 2008. The US government is also due to provide \$30 billion in military aid to Israel.

According to one US official, President Obama has no plans to cut the billions of dollars in military aid promised to Israel under a new 10-year contract agreed in 2007 by the Bush administration. This new contract is a 25 per cent increase compared to the last contract agreed by the previous US administration.

Amnesty International has reported in detail on suspected war crimes committed by the IDF and by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza. On 15 January, Amnesty International called on all governments to immediately suspend arms transfers to all parties to the Gaza conflict to prevent further violations being committed using munitions and other military equipment.

Read More

[Arms embargo vital as Gaza civilian toll mounts](#) (15 January 2009)

[Amnesty International blog from the region](#) (January/February 2009)

[Crisis in Gaza](#)

-  [Delicious](#)
-  [Digg](#)
-  [Facebook](#)
-  [Technorati](#)
- [What is this?](#)

- [Print](#)
- [Email page](#)

How you can help

[Donate](#)

[Join](#)

[Take Action](#)



In your country:

- [Privacy policy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [Worldwide sites](#)
- [Site map](#)