



If the UK really wants to stop Netanyahu's aggression, here's what it should do

Instead of banning arms sales, the Labour government should show Israel's far-right ministers that they cannot act with impunity

Azriel Bermant / Wed 4 Sep 2024

David Lammy's announcement that the UK would be suspending 30 arms export licences to Israel kicked off a storm in the UK, in Israel and even in the US. Boris Johnson accused the Labour government of "abandoning" Israel and handing victory to Hamas. Back in April, Johnson claimed that a UK ban on arms sales to Israel would be "the death wish of western civilisation."

Johnson and his fellow Conservatives ought to know that Tory governments in particular have followed a longstanding tradition of banning arms to Israel – from Edward Heath blocking the provision of spare parts for Israeli tanks and denying access to US air force planes resupplying arms to Israel in 1973, to Margaret Thatcher's blanket ban on arms sales to Israel in the wake of its invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

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