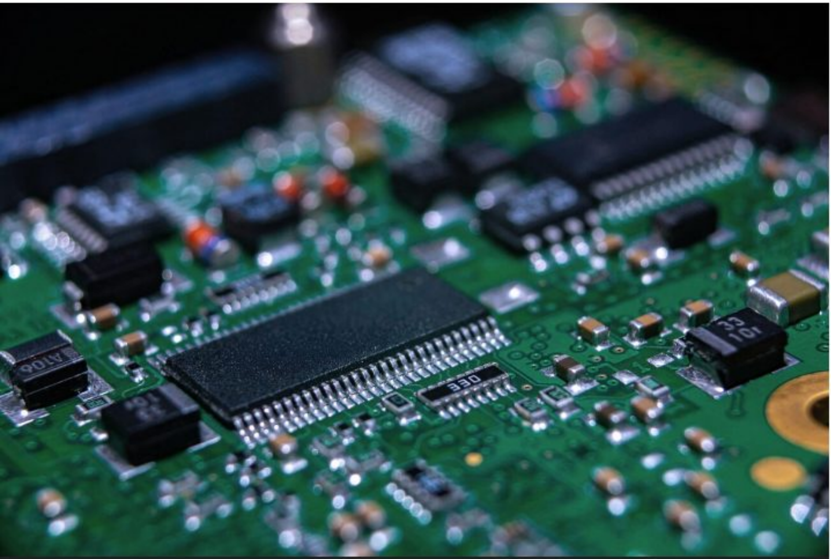

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Stories

Revealed: Ireland approved €20m in dual-use exports to IDF and Israeli Defence Ministry at height of Gaza war

Internal files show that approvals were granted in 2024, with a later reversal in 2025 citing risks to human rights and regional stability.

13th May, 2026 - 10 min read

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The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment sanctioned the export of €20 million worth of dual-use technology with civilian and military capabilities to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the country's Ministry of Defence in 2024 at the height of its military assault on Gaza, *The Currency* can reveal.

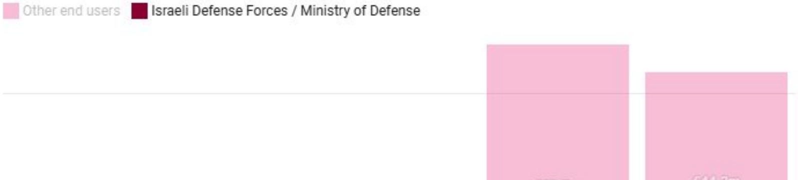
This is the first time that Irish officials have released details on a specific end user to the public, and the information comes following a series of requests under Freedom of Information legislation and further inquiries by this publication.

Dual-use items bridge the gap between civilian and military use, such as computer hardware with advanced cybersecurity or monitoring features. Due to a high risk of military diversion, exporters first need a licence from the department. The minister or officials acting on their behalf sign off on each application.

The data released to this publication by the department show it approved 11 licences worth €35 million for export of dual-use items to the IDF and the Israeli defence ministry, under which the IDF sits, in the five-year window between 2020 and 2024.

The data released to *The Currency* by the department shows the value of approved dual-use exports to the IDF and defence ministry increased to €20 million in 2024.

Dual-use exports to Israel, 2020-2024



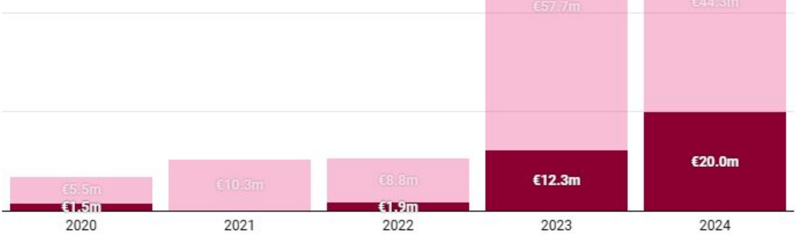


Chart: The Currency • Source: Dept of Enterprise; Oireachtas • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Reacting to *The Currency's* finding, several opposition parties reiterated calls for a ban on exports to Israel and for answers as to why exports were allowed to the IDF in 2024 when the Israeli armed forces were heavily active in Gaza.

Asked about the due diligence undertaken before it allowed for exports in 2024, a department spokesperson stated all applications are "considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with criteria set out within the relevant dual-use and military EU and national regulations and with Ireland's international obligations and responsibilities".

With each application, the spokesperson said, officials consider the nature of the items, the destination country, the end-user, and the intended end-use. A range of factors is considered, including regional stability and human rights concerns, according to the spokesperson.

"The primary purpose of export controls is not to block trade or exports, but to enable the free movement of legitimate goods while ensuring that certain sensitive categories are subject to appropriate regulation," the department added.

The department also refused to release details for any of the items which it approved for export between 2020 and 2024 or details of the exporting companies.

Licence refused over human rights risk

There were no dual-use exports approved in 2025, with documents released under freedom of information legislation stating the department refused to approve a further export licence in 2025 where the end user was the “IDF/Ministry of Defence”.

The released records for the licence refusal in 2025 provide detailed insight into developing concerns within the department with potential breaches of international human rights and humanitarian laws if it were to approve the items for export.

There was, the department found, a “clear risk the item(s) could be used to assist the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law” or “support aggressive actions against another country and contribute to regional instability”.

Under EU dual-use regulations, member states must deny a licence if there is a clear risk of any of these conditions. Authorities must also examine the human rights record of the end user which takes precedence over any past approval of licences.

The released records show that the department received an application to export €1.6 million worth of dual-use items to the “IDF/Ministry of Defence Israel” in September 2025 from one exporter. The name of the exporting company is redacted across the released files. The department said the release “could commercially disadvantage the exporter”.

In trying to argue for the award of the licence, the exporter told officials it had a “long running customer relationship with the end user” dating back to 1995. It said that it had received licences to export to the same end users since 2019. The number of previous licences granted to this company is redacted.

Officials note in released files that the fact that the exporter "has received licences for exports to the same end user in the past is irrelevant" and that it examines each application on a case-by-case basis. A letter was sent to the exporter on December 18, 2025, informing it that the department was refusing to grant the licence.

The due diligence carried out by the exporter to protect against "undesirable end use" was not sufficient to mitigate against these risks, the letter states. This includes the potential use in activities "that may violate human rights", the letter notes.

The decision was made after a detailed risk assessment and consultation with other departments. Key insights were received from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), according to the documents.

The DFAT refused to release its observations to *The Currency*, citing concerns that release of its submission could damage Ireland's diplomatic relationships with other countries.

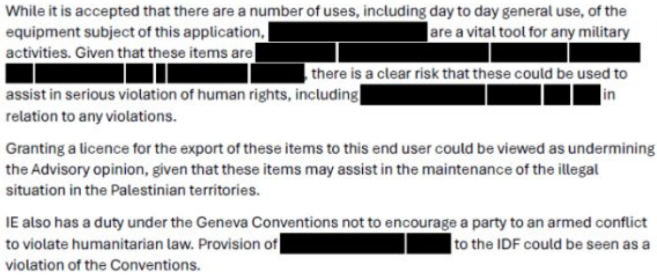
Geneva Conventions violation risk

A further document, again released under Freedom of Information legislation, outlines the enterprise department's decision-making process in greater detail. It states that officials identified a clear risk the equipment subject to the application could be used "to assist in serious violation of human rights" or "support aggressive behaviour against Palestinians".

Department officials pointed to Ireland's obligations under the Geneva Conventions "not to encourage a party to an armed conflict to violate humanitarian law," the document states. "Provision of [redacted name of dual-use items] to the IDF," the department file warns, "could be seen as a violation of the Conventions".

Officials also took the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) July 2024 advisory opinion into account. It found Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Gaza and the West Bank, is unlawful. It calls on all UN members to prevent trade or investment relations that assist in maintaining this unlawful presence.

"Granting a licence for the export of these items to this end user could be viewed as undermining the advisory opinion, given that these items may assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation in the Palestinian territories," the department report states.



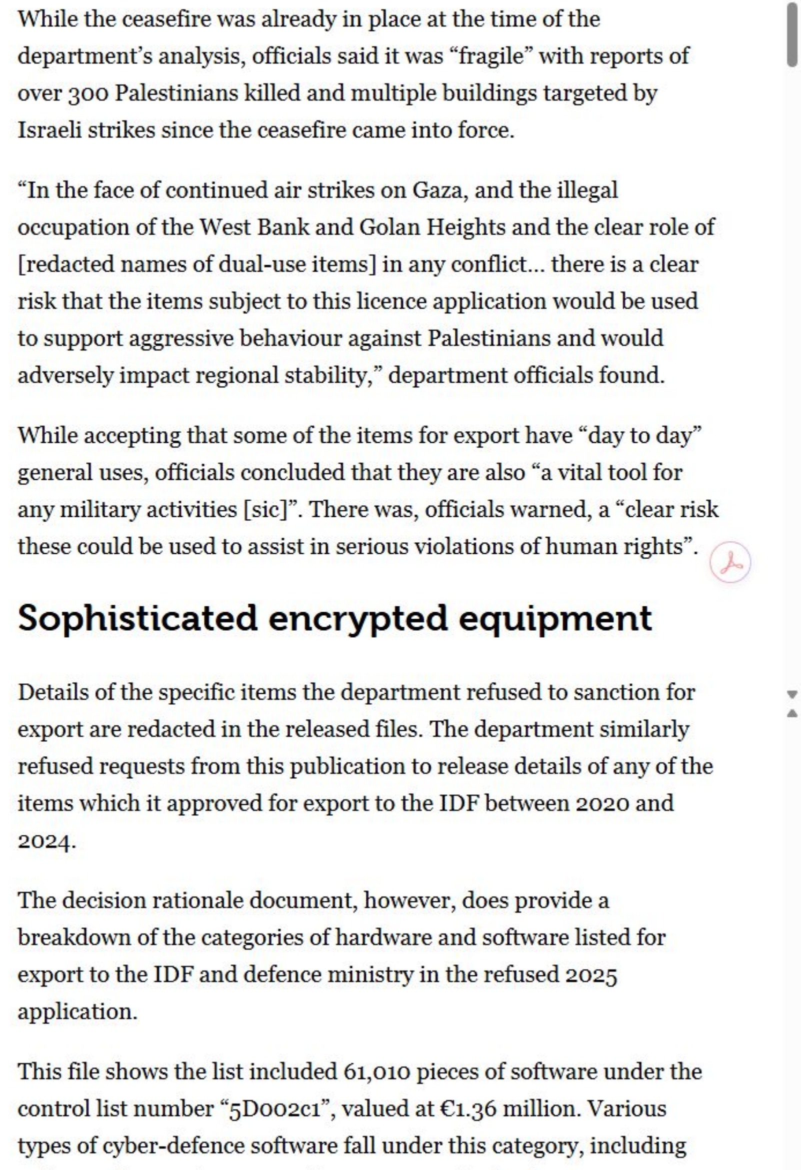
While it is accepted that there are a number of uses, including day to day general use, of the equipment subject of this application, [redacted] are a vital tool for any military activities. Given that these items are [redacted], there is a clear risk that these could be used to assist in serious violation of human rights, including [redacted] in relation to any violations.

Granting a licence for the export of these items to this end user could be viewed as undermining the Advisory opinion, given that these items may assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation in the Palestinian territories.

IE also has a duty under the Geneva Conventions not to encourage a party to an armed conflict to violate humanitarian law. Provision of [redacted] to the IDF could be seen as a violation of the Conventions.

Department of Enterprise assessment of dual-use licence application. Photo: Department of Enterprise via FOI

Department officials also weighed up the possibility that the end user could intend to use or threaten to use the dual-use items aggressively against another country, and examined if allowing the export could "encourage, aggravate, provoke or prolong conflicts".



While the ceasefire was already in place at the time of the department's analysis, officials said it was "fragile" with reports of over 300 Palestinians killed and multiple buildings targeted by Israeli strikes since the ceasefire came into force.

"In the face of continued air strikes on Gaza, and the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Golan Heights and the clear role of [redacted names of dual-use items] in any conflict... there is a clear risk that the items subject to this licence application would be used to support aggressive behaviour against Palestinians and would adversely impact regional stability," department officials found.

While accepting that some of the items for export have "day to day" general uses, officials concluded that they are also "a vital tool for any military activities [sic]". There was, officials warned, a "clear risk these could be used to assist in serious violations of human rights".

Sophisticated encrypted equipment

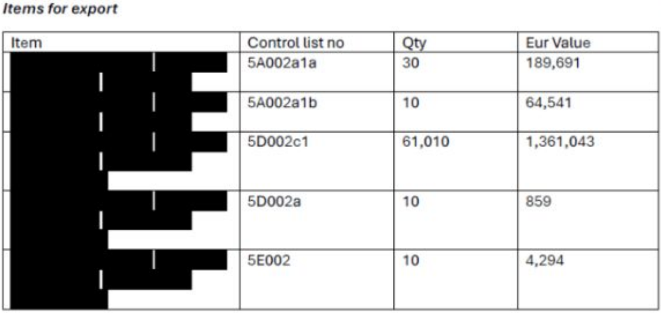
Details of the specific items the department refused to sanction for export are redacted in the released files. The department similarly refused requests from this publication to release details of any of the items which it approved for export to the IDF between 2020 and 2024.

The decision rationale document, however, does provide a breakdown of the categories of hardware and software listed for export to the IDF and defence ministry in the refused 2025 application.

This file shows the list included 61,010 pieces of software under the control list number "5D002c1", valued at €1.36 million. Various types of cyber-defence software fall under this category, including software that performs complex cryptography for data confidentiality.

There were ten items under the code “5D002a” worth €859. This category covers secure network configuration tools, encryption management systems, and software to integrate secure command-and-control infrastructure needed for large encrypted communications.

There were also hardware components on the list, including 30 items under “5A002a1a” worth just under €190,000. This could be the likes of secure routers, secure networking appliances, firewall components, or encryption modules.



Items for export

Item	Control list no	Qty	Eur Value
[redacted]	5A002a1a	30	189,691
[redacted]	5A002a1b	10	64,541
[redacted]	5D002c1	61,010	1,361,043
[redacted]	5D002a	10	859
[redacted]	5E002	10	4,294

Heavily redacted details of items for export in refused 2025 application. Photo: Department of Enterprise via FOI

A further 10 items valued at €64,541 with the code “5A002a1b” were also on the refused export list. Again, the category list is relatively broad but covers the likes of encrypted radio or satellite communications equipment, and secure data-transfer devices.

Iain Overton, the executive director of Action on Armed Violence, said that combined items from the general categories under which they fall could assist in securing targeting data and encrypting communications between command units. The London-based NGO records, investigates and disseminates evidence of armed violence against civilians worldwide, including tracking arms and dual-use flows globally.

Overton said, however, that the scale of redactions which blank out the names of the exact items on the list and the exporting company makes it near impossible to say for sure what the Israeli authorities planned to do with the exports. Other dual-use experts who spoke to *The Currency* came to the same conclusion.

Overton also questioned why Irish authorities only came to its position of concern in 2025, and not the year before at the height of military activities in Gaza. "There is a sense here of shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted," he told *The Currency*.

"These previous figures raise serious questions about how risk assessments were conducted during the height of the conflict, particularly given the mounting allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity throughout that period. Once a weapon enabler has been sold, it's hard to prove what harm it has caused, but you wouldn't have to be in a place to prove such harm if the thing was never sold in the first place," Overton added.

Why only now?

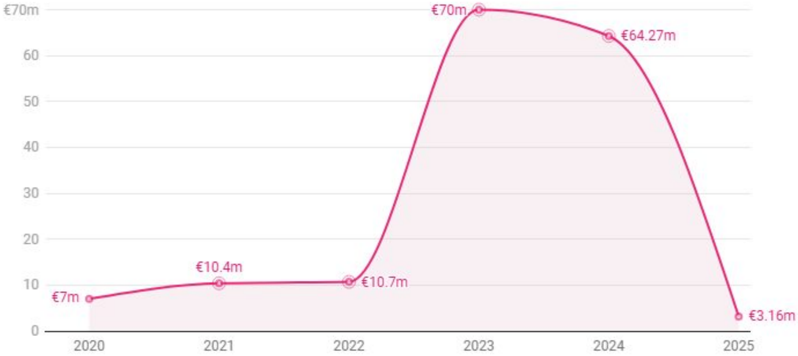
Overton's concerns were echoed by the foreign affairs spokesperson for the Social Democrats, Patricia Stephenson. She said *The Currency's* findings raise serious questions as to what was exported in 2024 and why the policy only changed in 2025.

"We have obligations under international law and under international humanitarian law not to take any action which could contribute to the continuation of the illegal settlements, or the serious human rights violations that we've seen in Gaza and the West Bank," Stephenson said.

"The Government has had the opportunity to do this for years, and they refuse to, while the human rights of Palestinians continue to be attacked by the Israeli State," she said.

Andrew Forde, an assistant professor in EU human rights law at DCU, said that the "highly significant and appropriate decision" to refuse exports could have followed a change of approach by the department in late 2024 or into 2025.

This may be reflected in the significant fall-off in overall dual-use exports from Ireland to Israel in 2025, according to official data.



Dual-use exports to Israel

State data shows a steep rise in exports in 2023 and 2024 which then fall off rapidly in 2025.

Chart: The Currency • Source: Dept of Enterprise; Oireachtas • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

One likely impact was the ICJ's order for provisional measures in

South Africa's case against Israel under the Genocide Convention, Forde said.

In addition, the rationale documentation refers to a new wave of illegal settlement expansions in the West Bank in 2025, which taken together with the ICJ's position, "may have tipped the balance for the Irish Government", Forde said.

The Taoiseach also formally first stated that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza in the Dáil and in public statements in May 2025.

From an international law perspective, the recent refusal "is very welcome indeed", Forde said. "It is a good faith application of EU law and an expression of Ireland's commitment to international law," he said, exactly "the kind of compliance we desperately need".

It still begs the question, however, Forde added, as to how €20 million in exports in 2024 passed the due diligence test. This implies, he said, there may have been "insufficient consideration for the potential risks arising under EU law or the Genocide Convention being carried out" by officials. "These are important questions to be answered," he said.

Further data released via a Parliamentary Question in February shows that the department still approved exports to other Israeli state bodies in 2025. *The Currency* also previously revealed millions of euro of dual-use exports were approved for export to **Israeli weapons and defence** companies between October 2023 and September 2025.

The department did not answer questions about its due diligence process and these recent approvals. "The Department does not comment on the decision-making process relating to individual applications," the spokesperson said, and reiterated that the department examines each application on a case-by-case basis.

Gaza situation clear in 2024

A number of opposition parties, Palestinian solidarity groups, and various human rights and international law experts have repeatedly called on the Government to stop issuing licences for dual-use exports to Israel for several years now.

The calls grew as **exports to the country shot up** following the commencement of Israel's military assault on Gaza in late 2023, and as details emerged in 2024 of the IDF's activities in Gaza which has killed over 73,000 people to date, around one-third of them children.

In January 2024, in its preliminary ruling in South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide, the ICJ found that there was a “real and imminent risk” to Palestinians’ plausible right to be protected from acts of genocide before it gave its final decision, which is still pending.

In March 2024, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, Francesca Albanese, presented a report to the UN Human Rights Council in which she found “reasonable grounds” to believe Israel was committing genocide in Gaza.

Later, in September 2025, a UN commission of inquiry concluded that Israeli security forces had committed four of the five genocidal acts as defined under international law.

These are killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of Palestinians in whole or in part; and imposing measures intended to prevent births.

They date activities stretching back to October 2023, following the Hamas attack which killed over 1,200 Israeli citizens.

Patricia Stephenson and other opposition politicians who spoke to *The Currency* said that the fact officials granted approval of any export to the IDF or the Israeli defence ministry in and of itself points to the need for greater action to curtail trade with Israel.

Stephenson said the findings point to the need to exact the Occupied Territories Bill, including services, “put a stop to trade with the illegally occupied Palestine Territory”, and ensure Ireland complies with its obligations arising from the ICJ advisory opinion from July 2024 calling on member states to ensure they do not assist Israel’s illegal occupation.

This was acknowledged by the department's legal advisor Declan Smyth when **under scrutiny from Stephenson** during an Oireachtas committee hearing on the bill last year. Smyth confirmed that, without services included, Ireland would only move "towards compliance" with its obligations under international law.

Richard Boyd Barrett wants to see all trade with Israel targeted and will table a People Before Profit bill in the Dáil on Thursday to sanction the state of Israel. The bill, which will go to vote next week, includes a call to prohibit the export of technology to the country.

Speaking to *The Currency*, Boyd Barrett said that it is "utterly shameful" that the Government granted licences for dual-use exports worth millions of euro in 2024.

"It's absolutely shameful that that was allowed, and it's clear, looking at the figures that the Government has given you… that we see exports of this [dual-use] technology going to the Israeli military, surging up to €20 million worth of equipment," he said. "That can't but be because of the military assault that they were engaged in in Gaza.

"If we're going to have any impact on stopping the horror that Israel is visiting on the people of Palestine, we need far-reaching and comprehensive sanctions imposed on that regime, and not a tokenistic restriction on trade because the Government has come under enormous pressure in recent times," Boyd Barrett added.

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