

Israel-Hamas war

France bars Israeli arms manufacturers at Paris trade show

Elbit, Rafael, Israel Aerospace Industries and Uvision stalls blocked after refusing French order to not show offensive weapons



A black wall blocks off Israel's aerospace pavilions, including Israel Aerospace Industries at the Paris Air Show © Bloomberg

Leila Abboud and **Sylvia Pfeifer** in Paris, and **James Shotter** in Jerusalem

Published YESTERDAY

Updated 09:44

Israel has slammed France for barring four of its arms manufacturers from the Paris Air Show, in the latest sign of increasing tensions between the two countries over Israel's bombardment and blockade of Gaza.

The stands of Elbit Systems, Rafael, Israel Aerospace Industries and Uvision were obscured behind black barriers on Monday after they refused to comply with an order from the French government to remove any offensive weapons from display.

“This outrageous and unprecedented decision reeks of policy-driven and commercial considerations,” said the Israeli defence ministry in a statement, accusing France of seeking to exclude “weapons that compete with French industries”.

During a visit to the air show, French prime minister François Bayrou said France was a staunch ally of Israel, but that what was happening in Gaza was “morally unacceptable” and required France to mark its “disapproval and distance”.

The diplomatic relationship between Israel and France has worsened in recent months as French President Emmanuel Macron has become increasingly critical of [Israel's war with Hamas](#) in Gaza, which has fuelled a humanitarian catastrophe in the enclave.

“France considers that the situation for the people of Gaza is terrible — a situation that is extremely grave both from a humanitarian and security standpoint,” Bayrou said. “France wanted to make it clear that offensive weapons should not be present at this exhibition.”



PLAY | 00:14

France shuts down four Israeli arms displays at Paris Air Show © Reuters

Macron has also been leading an international push for the recognition of a Palestinian state — which Israel's far-right government is determined to prevent. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has condemned the initiative.

But Macron did back Israel's attack on Iran, saying the country had the right to defend itself from nuclear threat.

The French government had told Israel about the ground rules multiple times over the past few weeks, according to a French official. Of the nine Israeli companies present at the Paris Air Show, four conformed to the order not to show offensive

weapons, so their stands remained open. The stand run by the Israel ministry of defence was also open on Monday.

If the Israeli companies — which between them make and design everything from drones and air defence systems to missiles and planes — changed their displays, then they would be allowed to reopen, said the French official.

Boaz Levy, chief executive of IAI, said the company had tried to negotiate with the organisers but had arrived on Monday morning to find its stand “blocked by black walls built overnight”.

“This type of behaviour is not acceptable and discriminates against us as Israelis and Jewish people since all of the other participants in this air show do not have these limitations,” he added.

This is not the first time France and Israel have clashed over aerospace and defence trade shows since the October 7 attacks in 2023. Dozens of Israeli companies were excluded from the Eurosatory show in June 2024, as well as the Euronaval trade show in November, after the French government decided that no weapons used for offensive attacks should be displayed by Israeli businesses.

The show’s organisers said talks were under way with the various parties to “find a favourable outcome to the situation”.

SIAE, the subsidiary of the French Aerospace Industries Association that organises the show, said in a statement that it had complied with an “instruction from the relevant French authorities” before the event “regarding the removal of certain equipment displayed on Israeli stands”.

The companies in question were “nonetheless authorised to exhibit at the show”, SIAE added.

Follow the topics in this article

French politics

Aerospace & Defence

Middle Eastern politics & society

Middle Eastern companies

Israel-Hamas war