

Activists Target Logistics Firms That Are Facilitating Israel's Genocide in Gaza

As the US government continues to arm the Israeli military, activists aim to disrupt the war machine's supply chain.

By Arvind Dilawar, TRUTHOUT
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Jews for Racial & Economic Justice demonstrates at Atlas Air's headquarters in White Plains, New York, on July 31, 2024, to protest the company's contract with the U.S. government to deliver military equipment to Israel.

ALEXA B. WILKINSON

PART OF THE SERIES

[Struggle and Solidarity: Writing Toward Palestinian Liberation](https://truthout.org/series/struggle-and-solidarity-writing-toward-palestinian-liberation/) (https://truthout.org/series/struggle-and-solidarity-writing-toward-palestinian-liberation/)

Israel's Ministry of Defense acknowledged

(<https://www.facebook.com/IsraelMOD/posts/pfbid02xtYrjU7PnkW7zXjaKVhujmaa4ocC9Rf71fHNgawjWqC7CMcjXnozLm527EeaYVjI>) a landmark on August 26: The Israeli military had received its 500th airlift of supplies from the United States since the attack by Hamas and other Palestinian militants on October 7, 2023. According to the ministry, those flights and more than a hundred sea shipments have delivered over 50,000 tons of military equipment (<https://truthout.org/articles/us-has-sent-israel-over-600-weapon-shipments-since-october/>), including armored vehicles, munitions and ammunition, “crucial for sustaining the [Israeli military’s] operational capabilities.”

A month earlier, on July 31, activists organized a related “celebration” (https://www.instagram.com/jfrejnyrc/p/C-GaiFZSPOG/?img_index=1) at the headquarters of cargo airline Atlas Air (<https://www.atlasair.com/>) in White Plains, New York. Introducing himself as Michael Steen, CEO of Atlas Air, one protester in a business suit stood behind a podium in the lobby and announced that “through our Department of Defense contracts, Atlas Air has made multiple deliveries to Israel in the last 10 months — as the bombs keep raining on Gaza, the dividends keep raining on our shareholders!”

The mock press conference was organized by Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (<https://www.jfrej.org/>), to draw attention to the complicity of U.S. logistics companies in the ongoing Israeli genocide in the Gaza Strip, where at least 40,000 Palestinians, including 16,500 children, have been killed, according to Al Jazeera (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>) at the time of this writing. Those figures are based on deaths confirmed by the Ministry of Health in Gaza, but the true toll — when factoring in less direct causes of death, such as starvation and destruction of infrastructure — may be as high as 186,000, as estimated by The Lancet ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext)). As the genocide continues, and the U.S. government persists in supplying the Israeli military, activists believe that logistics companies may be the most vulnerable links in the war machine.



MIKA SIMONCELLI



MIKA SIMONCELLI

“Disrupt the Shipment of Weapons”

As the announcement from Israel’s Ministry of Defense illustrates, continuing the Israeli genocide in Gaza is, at its most coldly calculated, a matter of logistics. Port Workers and Communities for Palestine — a coalition of workers at the Port of Newark-Elizabeth in New Jersey, the second-largest in the United States, and community members from the surrounding area — believe that the Israeli container shipping company ZIM (<https://www.zim.com/>) is involved in transporting military equipment to Israel.

As Israel’s largest shipping company, ZIM plays an outsized role in the country’s military and economy, both transporting and financing the weapons that allow the genocide and occupation of Palestine to continue, according to Port Workers and Communities for Palestine. One of the container service lines (<https://www.zim.com/global-network#trades>), advertised on ZIM’s website stretches from the U.S. to Israel, and in October, the company’s CEO announced that “it has offered Israel all of its vessels, ships and infrastructure,” according to The Jerusalem Post (<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/world/zim-to-dedicate-ships-for-israels-national-needs/ar-AA1hXZOJ>),

ZIM has offices across the United States, from New York to Los Angeles, per its website (<https://www.zim.com/global-network#offices>) — but Port Workers and Communities for Palestine have focused their immediate efforts to disrupt the shipping company’s operations on another company altogether: All-Ways Forwarding, an Elizabeth-based logistics

company with additional offices across the United States as well as Israel, according to [its website](https://shipallways.com/contact/) (<https://shipallways.com/contact/>). As an organizer with Port Workers and Communities for Palestine explained to *Truthout*, All-Ways arranges for the distribution of ZIM cargo to trucks and warehouses.

“All-Ways contracts with ZIM to move ZIM containers by truck to and from the port in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where ZIM ships dock weekly to deliver and pick up cargo,” said the organizer, who asked to remain anonymous to avoid retaliation. The coalition was able to calculate the amount of business done by All-Ways and ZIM through reviewing five years worth of bills of lading, documents detailing the transfer of cargo. “We believe about 7 percent of All-Ways Forwarding’s business is involved with dispatching the ZIM containers.” All-Ways failed to respond to multiple requests for comment from *Truthout*.

Port Workers and Communities for Palestine picketed the All-Ways headquarters in Elizabeth in July and then again in August, leading to the office’s closure both days. The coalition hopes to pressure All-Ways to sever its contract with ZIM, which would not only affect the latter’s operations, but potentially the Israeli economy at large.

“We are trying to both disrupt the shipment of weapons to the ‘Zionist entity’ as a direct method of stopping the genocide in Gaza and to attack the entire economy of the genocidal entity to limit their ability to inflict further pain and suffering on the besieged Palestinian population,” said the aforementioned organizer, referring to Zionism, the philosophy of Jewish ethno-nationalism upon which Israel was founded. (Anti-Zionists often refer to Israel as the “Zionist entity” to deny it legitimacy.) “Rank-and-file workers and organizers can bring this monstrous occupation to its knees by disrupting the supply chain.”



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“So Many Weapons That They Can’t Send Them All”

Unlike All-Ways, Atlas Air appears to be directly transporting military equipment to Israel. On January 29, [the U.S. Department of Defense](https://www.defense.gov/News/Contracts/Contract/Article/3659456/) announced that it had contracted the cargo airline, as well as nearly two dozen others, for “air charter transportation services” for passengers and cargo to “both military and commercial airfields.” While the department did not specify the cargo nor destination, Jews for Racial & Economic Justice was able to use open-source intelligence tools, such as [RadarBox](https://www.radarbox.com/), which tracks worldwide aviation, to monitor flights to the Israeli Air Force’s Nevatim Air Base, including dozens by Atlas Air. As Audrey Sasson, executive director of Jews for Racial & Economic Justice, explained to *Truthout*, the Department of Defense contracting with Atlas Air hints at just how much weaponry the U.S. government is providing to the Israeli military.

“They are shipping weapons,” said Sasson, referring to the U.S. government. “They are shipping bombs. They are shipping fighter jets. They are shipping all of these weapons to Israel to be able to use in their bombardment of Gaza.... The U.S. is supplying so many weapons that they can’t send them all through their usual channels. They’ve had to contract to be able to do that.” Atlas Air did not respond to multiple requests for comment from *Truthout*.

Based in White Plains, just outside of New York City, Atlas Air flies out of New York's John F. Kennedy Airport, but also has locations across the United States, per [its website](https://www.atlasair.com/contact-us/locations/). The mock press conference organized by Jews for Racial & Economic Justice at Atlas Air's headquarters in July was the theatrical opening to a protest of the company's contract with the U.S. government. After being forced from the lobby by security, the protesters rallied outside the building and held a genuine press conference to expose Atlas Air's dealings, through which they hoped to reach the company's rank-and-file workers as much as the media.

"Some were curious, some were angry, some were confrontational," Sassoon said of Atlas Air workers. "It was an opportunity to really confront them and to create a real sense of reckoning with what the people who work in these office buildings are doing every single day. The CEO of Atlas Air goes to his fancy, shiny office every single morning and is making decisions, crossing off to-do lists, holding corporate meetings to decide how many shipments and what is the latest contract that they're going to sign off on in order to send more bombs to Israel to rain down on Gaza. And we wanted people to see that."

"The U.S. is supplying so many weapons that they can't send them all through their usual channels. They've had to contract to be able to do that."

Jews for Economic & Racial Justice was not able to replicate the success that Port Workers and Communities for Palestine had in shuttering All-Ways's offices. Atlas Air's workplace remained open throughout the demonstration, and Sasson suspects that more pressure, including a diversity of tactics employed by various groups, is needed to force a change. This was the first time that Atlas Air was targeted by activists over its complicity in the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza.

"It's going to take a lot more pressure, obviously, for them to reconsider," said Sasson. "There's a lot of different pieces that need to be in place for Atlas to make a different decision. But I think what this does is at least open up space for other strategies to gain more momentum and for people in the wider movement who are trying to stop the genocide to have other tools and other targets."

That shift — from trying to pressure the U.S. government to discontinue materially supporting the Israeli genocide, to obstructing the various means which facilitate that support — already appears to be taking place among other activists too.

In June, the Palestinian Youth Movement launched [a campaign](https://www.maskoffmaersk.com/) against Maersk, one of the largest shipping companies in the world. Maersk [advertises](https://www.maersklinelimited.com/about/) its participation in the [Maritime Security Program](https://www.maritime.dot.gov/national-security/strategic-scalift/maritime-security-program-msp) and [Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement](https://www.maritime.dot.gov/national-security/strategic-scalift/voluntary-intermodal-scalift-agreement-visa), both initiatives through which the company is eligible for government contracts to transport military cargo for the Department of Defense.

While Maersk is a Danish company, it has locations across the United States, where it began operations as a contractor for the Navy, per [its website](https://www.maersk.com/local-information/north-america/united-states-of-america) (https://www.maersk.com/local-information/north-america/united-states-of-america). The Palestinian Youth Movement recently [called](https://www.instagram.com/p/C-6kq5xAR8b/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D) (https://www.instagram.com/p/C-6kq5xAR8b/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D) for two days of international action to “Mask Off Maersk,” exposing the company’s connections to the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

“The more concrete obstacles which the pro-Palestine, anti-Zionist movement can create for the Zionist entity’s economy, the more we can help push it into a continuing downward cycle,” the Port Workers and Communities for Palestine organizer told *Truthout*. “It’s the supply chain which delivers the weapons and weapons components to the Zionist entity, and it’s the supply chain which allows the Zionist economy to continue trade.”

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