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Gulf-backed genocide:

How Arab monarchies fuel Israel's war machine

From weapons and trade to logistics and espionage, Persian Gulf monarchies are quietly underwriting the occupation state's war on Gaza and its broader regional aggressions.



Photo Credit: The Cradle

The Persian Gulf states' silence – and in many cases, complicity – during Israel's ongoing war on Gaza has not come as a shock. These governments, long detached from the Palestinian struggle, have for years cultivated warm, if discreet, ties with Tel Aviv.

While Bahrain and the UAE made normalization of ties with Tel Aviv official through the US-brokered 2020 Abraham Accords, other states like Saudi Arabia and Qatar have played [quieter](#) but equally pivotal roles. Riyadh, often [described](#) as the architect behind normalization, and Doha, hiding behind its "mediator" label, have each aided the occupation state in crucial ways.

Though much of this [assistance](#) remains behind the scenes, it has been repeatedly acknowledged by US and Israeli officials. During his first term, US President Donald Trump

once [warned](#) that “Israel would be in big trouble without Saudi Arabia,” while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has [said](#) that Arab leaders now view Israel “not as their enemy, but their greatest ally,” adding that they “want to see us defeat Hamas.”

Such statements offer a glimpse into the vast, opaque network of regional cooperation propping up the occupation state’s war machine.

Economic complicity

Despite overwhelming popular support throughout the Arab world for Palestine, and growing calls for grassroots boycotts, Persian Gulf–Israeli trade has only surged. The UAE now ranks as Israel’s top Arab trade partner, while Bahrain’s commerce with Tel Aviv spiked by a staggering 950 percent during the first 10 months of the Gaza war.

Even amid war and boycott efforts, “[kosher-certified](#)” goods from Arab countries continue to enter Israeli markets. UAE-based brands like Al Barakah Dates and Hunter Foods, along with Saudi Arabia’s Durra (a sugar supplier), have maintained trade channels.

Qatar has exported crude materials for plastics used in Israeli industries. Bahrain went so far as to officially recognize goods produced in illegal West Bank settlements as Israeli in origin. More insidiously, Persian Gulf investments are [directly fueling](#) Israeli settlement expansion. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar have funneled money into Avenue Partners, a firm chaired by Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner, who [remains involved](#) in advising the Trump administration from afar.

That money flows into Phoenix Holdings, which finances key banks involved in settlement construction – [Leumi](#), [Hapoalim](#), and Discount Bank – as well as telecom firms like Cellcom and Partner, and construction companies like Electra and Shapir, all of which operate inside occupied Palestinian territory.

When Yemen’s blockade disrupted shipping lanes for Israeli-linked cargo in the Red Sea, cutting off 70 percent of Tel Aviv’s food imports, it was the Persian Gulf states that [rushed to patch the breach](#). The UAE created an overland logistics corridor from Dubai to Tel Aviv via Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and Bahrain repurposed its ports to serve as alternate shipping hubs for Israeli goods arriving from India and China.

Military ties beneath the surface

From the earliest days of Israel’s onslaught on Gaza, the UAE has doubled down on its strategic military relationship with the occupation state. In 2024, *Balkan Insight* revealed that a UAE-linked firm, Yugoimport-SDPR, exported \$17.1 million worth of weapons to Israel via military aircraft directly involved in bombing Gaza.

But the arms trade is only part of this treacherous picture. The UAE's state-owned defense giant EDGE holds shares in Israeli military contractors like Rafael and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), companies that retrofit Emirati planes into military freighters. [Abu Dhabi](#) has also welcomed offices from Israeli weapons manufacturers like Bayt Systems and Third Eye Systems, and proudly [hosted 34 Israeli defense firms](#) at [IDEX 2025](#) – a major arms expo used to secure deals with the occupation army.

Though not formally normalized, Saudi Arabia is [militarizing its ties](#) with Israel through indirect channels. One method: purchasing Israeli systems like the TOW missile through US-based subsidiaries of Elbit Systems. Another: acquiring [surveillance drones](#) from South Africa, which are disassembled and reassembled in the kingdom to mask their Israeli origins. A recent anti-drone system – suspected to be designed by Israeli firm [RADA](#) – was spotted at the Royal Saudi Air Defense base in Tabuk, near King Faisal Air Base.

Meanwhile, Qatar has quietly boosted its military coordination with Tel Aviv. Doha continues to source spare parts for tanks, armored vehicles, and aerial tankers from Israeli suppliers, and its military has participated in joint drills involving Israel and other Persian Gulf states – including exercises in Greece held [just over a week ago](#).

Logistical lifelines to Tel Aviv

Beyond military and economic ties, Persian Gulf states have facilitated the flow of weapons to Israel through logistical support channels. As the US ramped up its “unprecedented airlift” of tens of thousands of missiles, munitions, and Iron Dome components, the Gulf's airspace and bases became critical.

US arms shipments passed through Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, and especially Qatar, where the [Al-Udeid Air Base](#) – home to US Central Command – served as a hub for at least 18 documented transfers. Several were routed through [Cyprus](#) to avoid direct flight tracking. In the UAE, Dubai International Airport became a waypoint for Israeli reservists flying in from Asia. Coordinated through the Israeli consulate in Dubai, these flights funneled soldiers into the war in Gaza. Emirati authorities also arranged leisure retreats for Israeli troops between deployments and allowed Jewish organizations in Dubai to send care packages to the occupation military.

Pipeline diplomacy and energy normalization

Earlier this month, as Trump prepared to visit Saudi Arabia seeking investment in US infrastructure, Israeli Energy Minister Eli Cohen unveiled plans for a regional oil pipeline stretching from Ashkelon to Saudi Arabia via Eilat.

The project falls under the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor ([IMEC](#)), a US-backed alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with links running through the UAE, Jordan, and occupied Palestinian lands.

In a related move, Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa – son of the Bahraini king and chair of Bapco Energy – announced the sale of a pipeline stake to BlackRock, the US investment giant notorious for its financial ties to Israeli settlements. This deal cannot be separated from the broader normalization agenda.

Spycraft and surveillance

In one of the clearest signs of deepening security cooperation, [Axios](#) revealed a secret 2024 meeting in Bahrain between Israeli army chief Herzi Halevi and senior military officials from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, and Egypt.

Overseen by US Central Command, the summit focused on countering Iranian retaliation and disrupting weapons flows to Gaza from resistance forces in Iraq and Yemen – operations that often transit through Persian Gulf-controlled airspace.

Bahrain's role was particularly overt: Nasser bin Hamad openly declared his country's commitment to disrupting Iranian response operations in coordination with the US Fifth Fleet stationed in Manama. Analysts now speculate that Tel Aviv could be granted permanent naval access to strategic Gulf waters.

This growing security convergence has also opened the door for Israeli tech to penetrate Persian Gulf infrastructure. Bahrain now [relies](#) on Israeli firms for anti-drone systems, satellite surveillance, and cybersecurity. One notable [collaboration](#) involves Bahraini company Crescent Technologies and Israeli cyber defense powerhouse CyberArk.

The UAE is pushing the envelope even further. Emirati firms have signed deals with XM Cyber – co-founded by a former Mossad chief – to secure national energy infrastructure. XM Cyber works in tandem with Rafael and other elite Israeli military firms as part of a consortium targeting sensitive Gulf markets, including oil, energy, and data. Meanwhile, [Orpak Systems](#), another Israeli company, has quietly entered Arab oil sectors under nondescript branding to avoid detection.

Despite their public posturing and periodic statements of support for Palestine, the Persian Gulf states have quietly entrenched themselves in Tel Aviv's war effort. Through investment flows, arms deals, intelligence cooperation, and energy infrastructure, they have become vital enablers of the genocide in Gaza.

This alliance – crafted in backrooms and sealed with economic interests – has allowed Israel to prosecute its war on Gaza with Gulf assistance at every logistical and financial juncture.

Far from being passive actors, these states are now active partners in a conflict that has devastated an entire people.

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