

Report to New York City-area rally exposes role of Danish shipping giant Maersk in Gaza genocide

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On December 14, the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and several other protest organizations opposed to Israel's genocide against the Palestinians held a press conference and rally in front of City Hall in Jersey City, New Jersey, to present the findings of a recent report on maritime shipping giant and logistics firm AP Moller Maersk's role in supplying military goods for Israel's genocide in Gaza.

The report, prepared by researchers in and around the Palestinian Youth Movement and released last month under the title, "Evidence of Maersk Shipments to Israel," reveals that from September 2023 to September 2024, Maersk, a leading multi-billion-dollar shipping and logistics company, has transported millions of pounds of military equipment to the Israel Defense Forces from the United States. The company has long been contracted by the Pentagon to transport weapons in the service of American imperialism.

All but six of the over 2,000 shipments examined departed from the Port of Elizabeth, part of the Port Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal in New Jersey, a major component of the Port of New York and New Jersey and the largest US East Coast port. The port includes Maersk's largest East Coast terminal, operated by its subsidiary APM Terminals, located just outside of Jersey City, across the Hudson River from New York City.

Researchers reviewed 2,110 Maersk shipments from the US over the last year listed as shipping to or on behalf of the Government of Israel's Ministry of Defense (IMOD). According to the report, 827 of the 2,110 Maersk shipments to IMOD were hulls, engines, or specialized parts for armored personnel carriers and tactical vehicles, in addition to parts for aircraft and projectile systems. Five hundred and twenty-two shipments were miscellaneous, yet still critical, military goods, including cars, forklifts, tires, brake and transmission fluids, and other machinery. Twenty-eight had Product Descriptions for Diplomatic Cargo and 733 had no Product Description at all.

The report emphasizes that "unidentified cargo," shipments omitting descriptions of material being shipped and comprising almost 35 percent of all observed shipments since the beginning of the genocide in Gaza in October 2023, cannot automatically be considered non-military equipment. Addressing this point, the researchers write, "Particularly considering the Spanish government's action in May to block military shipments to Israel, it is entirely possible that IMOD is intentionally concealing the true nature of this cargo in order to flout restrictions on weapons shipments."

Since May 2024, over 944 of the 2110 shipments to Israel's military by Maersk have transited through the Port of Algeciras in Spain.

Over 6 million pounds of cargo have been shipped to the Israeli military by Maersk with contents "unidentified" in shipping logs. Interglobal Forwarding Services, IMOD's freight forwarder in the US that organizes the shipments of arms and other supplies, covering for US manufacturers of arms and ensuring their swift delivery, is based in New Jersey.

Among the major firms involved in the manufacturing of war materials are Oshkosh Corporation and Rolls-Royce Solutions America.

The instruments that have made possible the barbaric slaughter by Israel in Gaza, the West Bank, and now Syria, shipped out by Maersk, have all been manufactured in and paid for by the US. The Biden administration has pumped tens of billions of dollars into the Israeli regime, providing nearly 70 percent of Israel's imported arms, including fighter jets, missiles, and thousands of 2,000-pound bombs capable of leveling entire city blocks.

The valuable information included in the report underscores the need for mass action by the dockworkers and the wider working class to halt the flow of shipments. The fight of the working class in defense of its living conditions and against massive job cuts by the corporate

oligarchy must be connected to a worldwide mobilization against war, which is the other means through which Wall Street is seeking to bolster its profits.

A dock strike this October showed what is possible. It shut down ports across the eastern United States, from New England to Texas, demonstrating the immense social power of the working class. The main demand of the workers is job protection against automation, which threatens to wipe out whole sections of the workforce.

The mobilization of workers against war requires a rank-and-file rebellion against the pro-war, pro-management union bureaucrats. The October strike was shut down by the bureaucracy of the International Longshoremen's Association with a 90-day extension of the old deal, without workers main demands being met. A primary factor in the ILA's decision, as the WSWS explained, was to "ensure the flow of weapons for America's global wars."

Nevertheless, the expiration of the contract extension on January 15, only five days before the inauguration of Donald Trump, sets the stage for a massive showdown between the working class and the incoming fascistic administration even before it takes office.

In spite of the powerful revelations of the main report, the struggles of the working class barely merited a mention. They barely even acknowledged the dockworkers strike, which had taken place only a short distance away from the rally.

Speakers at the Jersey City rally repeatedly stressed that they are putting corporate executives and politicians "on notice" for supporting the genocide. One speaker summed up the political perspective and program, stating, "we need to put pressure on these companies so that we can end this. That's why we're here today."

To the limited extent that dockworkers, or even the working class more broadly, were mentioned, rank-and-file workers were blamed for the pro-war policies of the union bureaucrats. One rally speaker said, "longshoremen are incredibly conservative, they actually are very proud to move weapons." This is completely false, all the more so given that the workforce on the docks are drawn from all over the world.

Several speakers praised the resolution passed over a year ago by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, whose members include dockworkers at the ports of Oakland and San Francisco, expressing solidarity with the call of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) for an international general strike to halt the shipment and production of arms for Israel.

The ILWU's resolution, however, has remained a dead letter. This is because the union officials are in bed with the Biden administration and the Democrats, who are helping

carry out the genocide and rounding up anti-war protesters on college campuses.

It is not the rank-and-file dockworkers who are the rabid warmongers, but the ILA bureaucrats. ILA President Harold Daggett pledged to continue moving military equipment through the East Coast ports during the three-day strike.

The union apparatus tries to stoke nationalist divisions among workers through emphasizing the treachery of "foreign-owned companies" and presenting dockworkers' struggles as a central bulwark of US "national security and economy" against "a foreign adversary, like China."

Daggett and his fellow labor bureaucrats, steeped in nationalism and anti-communism, have collaborated with the Biden White House to keep the East and Gulf Coast ports running. They will continue to do so under Trump White House further advance the interests of American imperialism.

The interests of dockworkers and their brothers and sisters at every port and in every industry internationally are inherently bound up with the fight against imperialist war. Dockworkers cannot defend their jobs and standard of living without opposing war and vice versa. This requires engaging in a political struggle, independent of and opposed to the capitalist political parties and their pseudo-left accomplices, against dictatorship and war.

Such a movement must take the form of a rank-and-file rebellion against the pro-corporate trade union bureaucracy. This requires the formation of independent rank-and-file committees, democratically controlled by the workers themselves and uniting dockworkers across coasts and internationally with workers across industries in a struggle against the capitalist profit system.

This is the program of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). Dockworkers and all those who want to stop arms shipments to Israel should contact the IWA-RFC immediately.



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