



British company responsible for California chemical leak is building F-35 parts for Israel

Description

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F-35

The military contractor responsible for a huge chemical leak in southern California is also [manufacturing](#) parts for F-35 jets for Israel.

A 7,000-gallon chemical tank ruptured and threatened to explode at the GKN Aerospace plant in Garden Grove, California, last week. It [forced](#) over 50,000 people to evacuate. Crucially, GKN is a British engineering company, [headquartered](#) in Birmingham.

The tank contains thousands of gallons of methyl methacrylate. This is a highly volatile and flammable substance used to make plastic. Only recently, it was deemed at risk of a major spillage or an explosion.

Garden Grove is a predominantly working-class and immigrant city in Orange County, just outside of Los Angeles. This means that the evacuation order mainly affected lower-income residents.

Military-industrial complex

Since 2017, the plant has brought in more than \$13m in subcontracts with [Lockheed Martin](#), a huge military contractor which is swimming in complicity for Israel's genocide.

A previous [analysis](#) by Ploughshares, an independent Canadian research institute, found that Lockheed awards subcontracts to hundreds of companies in more than a dozen countries to help build F-35 jets.

Now, *The Intercept* has [revealed](#) that GKN is one of the companies manufacturing parts for F-35 Jets, which are likely bound for Israel. In total, GKN has raked in over \$255m from subcontracts with Lockheed Martin.

GKN openly describes its Garden Grove plant as "the leading provider" of the plastic bubble which surrounds the cockpit of the F-35 fighter jet.

Importantly, Methyl methacrylate, the chemical that started leaking from the plant last week, is an ingredient in this plastic bubble.

John Ramming Chappell, advocacy and legal advisor at Center for Civilians in Conflict, told *The Intercept*:

Due to the nature of the F-35's global supply chain, it is likely that the F-35 components produced at the Garden Grove facility are incorporated into aircraft exported to Israel

This is the same type of aircraft that the Israeli military has used to kill civilians and violate international humanitarian law.

Supplying war criminals with F-35 fighter machines

The IOF has [repeatedly used](#) F-35s to murder and maim civilians in Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, and Yemen. Hundreds of human rights organisations have [called](#) on governments to halt their roles in F-35 production for Israel.

Israel currently has 48 F-35s but is planning to expand its fleet to 100. On January 20, the *Canary* shared news from Lakenheath Alliance for Peace that [three new F-35s left the UK](#) air base, RAF Mildenhall. These were heading from the UK to Israel.

Obviously, most of these were paid for with US State Department funding because Israel can't even fund its own genocide.

On May 19, only several days before the leak began, Garden Grove city officials issued a permit for a 34,000-square-foot expansion of GKN Aerospace's facility.

The company claimed the reason for the expansion was the increasing demand for F-35 jets. This would enable the company to double its production of aircraft canopies.

Swimming in controversy

In recent years, GKN agreed to pay a settlement of almost \$1m for environmental violations. These included failure to maintain records of emissions and operating equipment without a permit. Before that, authorities also [fined](#) the company for failing to properly inspect its machinery and for labour safety violations.

Obviously, these types of things, along with the current leak, are entirely predictable. What else should we expect when a company puts war, murder and profit above morals and people?

GKN Garden Grove has also raked in more than \$4.5m in additional [subcontracts](#) with [Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, which is](#) also owned by Lockheed Martin. It signed contracts in 2023 to produce CH-53K military helicopters. In 2025, Israel [ordered](#) a dozen new Sikorsky military helicopters.

We should have guessed that the US military-industrial complex played a part in a potentially deadly spill, which could have harmed tens of thousands of people.

Of course, the US government will continue to sacrifice the well-being, safety, and paychecks of poor people in the US. All so that Israel can continue bombing black and brown people in West Asia without consequence.

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