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12.09.2024



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Axis of Normalization:

The Arabs and Turks who sustain Israel's wartime economy

While West Asia's Axis of Resistance seeks to weaken Israel's military, economy, and security, a handful of Arab states and Turkiye are secretly striving to bolster Israel and supply its war on Gaza. This is the region's new 'Axis of Normalization.'



(Photo Credit: The Cradle)

Yemen stands as one of the few Arab states working to [mount economic pressure](#) on the occupation state by blocking the shipment of Israeli-bound goods from transiting the Red Sea and other regional waterways.

Yet, while [Yemen advances its sea blockades](#), other Arab states continue to provide a lifeline to Israel's war-driven economy. Data from this year shows that countries that have normalized with Tel Aviv, like the UAE, Bahrain, Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco, are helping Israel overcome the blockade, providing critical trade routes that circumvent Yemeni efforts. Meanwhile, Turkiye, whose president has ratcheted up his [anti-Israeli rhetoric](#) in public, has pursued a more deceptive approach, rerouting goods through Palestinian customs – [and Greece](#) – to disguise the extent of its direct trade with Israel.

Arab trade relations with Israel

[The Cradle](#) has previously reported on trade relations between Arab countries and Israel and how they are complicit in [funding genocide](#). Despite expectations that these states would sever ties after Israel's war of extermination on Gaza, the reality tells a different story.

While Yemen, under the Ansarallah-aligned government in Sanaa, has imposed a naval blockade on Israeli ports, many Arab governments have not taken similar actions. Instead, these countries engage in a double game, publicly condemning Israel while quietly maintaining economic ties, much like [Colombia](#), which formally cut ties with Tel Aviv but continued discreet cooperation behind the scenes.

Trade figures for 2024 reveal a significant shift, particularly in relations between Bahrain and Israel. Israeli imports from Bahrain surged by an astonishing 1161.8 percent between January and July 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, despite Bahrain's parliament issuing statements [condemning](#) Israel. In public, the two states played a very different game: Israel's ambassador left Bahrain, and Manama recalled its envoy to Tel Aviv and suspended economic relations.

These actions were largely symbolic, aimed at appeasing a Bahraini public that overwhelmingly opposes normalization with Israel rather than reflecting genuine policy changes.

The UAE and Egypt: Pillars of economic support

The UAE, a key player in the US-brokered 2020 Abraham Accords, saw its Israeli imports rise by 14.2 percent in 2024. As the region's spearhead for normalization with Tel Aviv, Abu Dhabi continues to play a strategic role in the US-Israeli plans for Gaza in the post-war period.

“[Secret meetings](#)” in July between officials from Israel, the US, and the UAE aimed at quelling any resistance within Gaza, highlight Abu Dhabi's critical role in supporting Israel's future political projects.

It is important to note that the increase in imports from Bahrain and the UAE is primarily due to Israel's growing reliance on their ports to transport goods from West Asia by land, through Saudi Arabia and Jordan, as a means of bypassing Yemeni strikes in the Red Sea. These parties deny the existence of this [land route](#) that [The Cradle](#) and other media outlets have [long exposed](#).

Previous reports indicate that adopting this [land corridor](#) has enabled Israel to increase exports of consumer goods, which were previously costly to transport by air or sea.

Similarly, Egypt, the first Arab state to normalize relations with Tel Aviv in the 1978 Camp David Accords, has become increasingly critical to Israeli trade, with imports rising by 16 percent and exports surging by nearly 130 percent. Six [Egyptian Mediterranean ports](#) have become key transit hubs for goods moving in and out of Israel: Port Said, Al-Arish, Abu Qir, Alexandria, Dekheila, and Damietta.

August [reports](#), based on the tracking of 19 vessels over the preceding three months using open-source maritime data, revealed that these ships were exclusively engaged in round-trip voyages between Israeli and Egyptian ports.

Notably, six vessels have been dedicated to ongoing cement transportation between these ports, supporting construction projects. This activity has contributed to the notable rise in Israel's imports of investment products.

Egyptian ports serve as vital hubs for Israeli trade due to their proximity, particularly to the port of Ashdod, just 29 kilometers from Gaza, and the strategic port of Haifa. This geographical advantage lowers shipping costs, thereby reducing the prices of goods transported by sea.

In addition, Israeli exports to Morocco have continued to grow, undeterred by the war in Gaza. Trade between the two countries has increased by [81.42 percent](#) in 2024 compared to the previous year, continuing a pattern that began before the conflict.

Turkiye's deceptive trade tactics

Turkiye presents a more complex case. After halting direct trade with Israel in May, Turkish exports to Israel plummeted. However, Ankara has found ways around its embargo by channeling goods [through Palestinian customs](#), giving the appearance of severed ties while trade continues behind the scenes.

The Turkish Exporters Association reported a 423 percent increase in exports to occupied Palestinian territories in the first eight months of 2024, rising from \$77 million in the same period last year to \$403 million this year. Notably, Turkish exports to Palestine surged by 1156 percent in August alone, from \$10 million in 2023 to \$127 million in 2024.

What's most galling about Ankara's claim to have increased exports to Palestine is that the Israeli government has stopped releasing funds to the occupied West Bank authorities: Palestinians simply do not have the financial means to jack up their imports.

This demonstrates not only the duplicity of the Turkish authorities but also the further betrayals of the Palestinian Authority (PA) against its people in Gaza. Additionally, previous reports have suggested that trade between Ankara and Tel Aviv continues through [third countries like Greece](#).

The war in Gaza has only deepened the economic divide among Arab states. While Yemen seeks to apply economic pressure on Israel, countries like Egypt, the UAE, and Bahrain are reinforcing Israeli trade routes and helping prop up the occupation state's economy. Turkiye's duplicity and the PA's complicity also serve to bolster Israel's interests.

As history unfolds, the actions – or rather the inactions – of these sell-out states are unlikely to be forgotten. Their roles in either supporting or opposing the war will be etched into the Arab and Muslim world's collective memory, drawing a clear line between those who stood for Gaza and those who backed the genocide of tens of thousands of civilians in just 360 square kilometers.

The [divide](#) between West Asia's Axis of Resistance and its Axis of Normalization has never been more pronounced.

SEP 11, 2024