

Drone Firm Expelled from NYC Amid Gaza Controversy



Drone technology company Easy Aerial has found itself outside the gates of the Brooklyn complex owned by the City of New York, only weeks after the city's new mayor, Zohran Mamdani, assumed office.

The municipality terminated the company's lease following months of protests led by pro-Palestinian activists, raising pressing questions about the firm's identity, the reasons behind the decision not to renew its license, and the nature of its ties to the Israeli military and the assault on Gaza.

Why Did New York Refuse to Renew the Company's Contract?

Brooklyn City Council member Lincoln Restler explained that the board of the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation a government entity that manages the complex — decided in its January 2026 meeting not to renew Easy Aerial's lease. "Public property should not be leased to companies that turn drones into weapons of war," he said.

The decision was officially announced in mid-February 2026, six weeks after Zohran Mamdani took office as mayor of New York City.

Although neither the mayor nor the board explicitly framed the decision as political, activists and several city council members argued that the company is involved in manufacturing weapons used in war crimes, and that its presence in a municipally owned facility contradicts the city's stated values.

The company itself offered no detailed comment. However, a spokesperson for the complex told the New York Post that the decision was made "for business reasons related to operational requirements and compliance with regulations." In other words, the administration did not publicly acknowledge political pressure, but it also did not deny the company's military activities.

The grassroots campaign Demilitarize Brooklyn Navy Yard described the decision as the culmination of a yearlong effort, asserting that posters, demonstrations, and coordinated messaging were all part of a sustained campaign to remove the company.

What Is Easy Aerial?

Founded in 2014 in the United States, Easy Aerial develops autonomous drones and so-called "drone-in-a-box" systems.

The company maintains two principal locations: its headquarters in Brooklyn and another office in Gan Shomron in the occupied Palestinian territories.

It describes itself as a manufacturer of multi-use drones serving military, security, and commercial sectors.

On its official website, the company states that its products were "designed by

former military personnel and aerospace and robotics engineers, with support from the U.S. Air Force.”

Its client list includes the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Border Patrol. Hebrew-language media have also reported that it has sold equipment to the Israeli military.

Who Runs the Company and Who Founded It?

Easy Aerial was founded by Serbian-American engineer Ivan Stamatovski and Israeli entrepreneur Ido Gur.

Stamatovski has served as the company’s chief technology officer and head of product, drawing on a background in robotics engineering and overseeing design and development. Ido Gur, a co-founder, has longstanding ties to Israel’s drone industry.

The anti-war organization Workers World has stated that the company was founded in 2015 by Stamatovski and “a former Israeli occupation soldier named Ido Gur,” accusing it of supplying surveillance drones used in West Asia and in monitoring communities of color in New York.

Gur later moved on to lead another U.S.-based aerial technology firm, according to a report by The Jerusalem Post.

Behind the company’s operational facade stands a network of investors who have poured millions into Easy Aerial, many of whom maintain strong ties to Israel’s technology ecosystem. This financial structure suggests that Easy Aerial is not merely an American security company, but part of an investment portfolio aimed at advancing Israeli technological superiority and marketing it globally through the U.S. gateway.

What Are the Company’s Key Products?

1. The “Drone-in-a-Box” System:

A rugged, portable ground station that houses a drone. The system operates entirely autonomously: the box opens automatically, the drone launches to execute a pre-programmed mission or respond to a security sensor signal, and then returns to land and recharge on its own, requiring no human intervention on site.

2. Tethered Continuous Surveillance Technology:

Perhaps its most militarily significant innovation, these “smart aerial surveillance systems” do not rely on battery-powered free flight. Instead, the drone is connected to its ground station via a reinforced cable that supplies continuous power while transmitting video and sensor data through the same cable rather than radio waves. This renders the connection resistant to jamming and shielded

from electronic hacking.

3. The Aerial Fleet:

The company produces several models tailored to different missions, including:

Albatross: A hexacopter designed for heavy payloads (up to 3.8 kilograms, or 8.4 pounds).

Raptor: A hybrid drone capable of operating in tethered mode for continuous surveillance or switching to free flight to pursue a moving target.

Alpine Swift: A lightweight, fast quadcopter used for rapid response and close-range monitoring.

What Is the Nature of Easy Aerial's Ties to Israel?

Despite its U.S. registration and marketing claims that its products are “Made in the USA,” the company’s roots extend deep into Israel’s military ecosystem.

In 2019, Easy Aerial and the Israeli firm Blue White Robotics received a joint grant from the BIRD Foundation a U.S.-Israel government-backed binational industrial research and development initiative to develop a drone program for homeland security purposes.

Stamatovski has acknowledged that the project was never commercially launched due to funding constraints, but he has confirmed that the company maintains an office in the occupied territories and sought early collaboration with Israel.

Since 2021, promotional videos broadcast on the Israeli outlet Yedioth Ahronoth’s channel have showcased the company’s systems in the context of Israeli military border surveillance, suggesting their use in monitoring Palestinians.

A 2022 LinkedIn post by Ido Gur further indicated that Easy Aerial supplied Elbit Systems Israel’s largest arms manufacturer with drone control software.

How Were the Company's Technologies Used in Gaza?

During Israel’s October 2023 offensive on the Gaza Strip, Ivan Stamatovski acknowledged that his company’s products saw “immediate demand” and that its tethered drones were deployed to provide “perimeter surveillance and protection.”

Marwa Fatafta of Access Now argued that such drones cannot be described as merely “defensive,” noting that surveillance technology forms an integral part of the occupation infrastructure, reinforcing systems of separation and control over the Palestinian population.

She added that companies like Easy Aerial cannot control where their products are used, rendering them complicit when those technologies are deployed in the occupied Palestinian territories.

A report by Mondoweiss cited activists from the Demilitarize Brooklyn Navy Yard campaign who said the Israeli military had displayed Easy Aerial drones patrolling Gaza's border in a 2021 video. The activists further asserted that the company's hexacopter and quadcopter models are capable of carrying bombs or sniper systems, despite being marketed as surveillance tools.

The report also referenced a contract with Elbit Systems to integrate these drones onto military vehicles effectively transforming them into combat platforms.

The closure of Easy Aerial's Brooklyn site marks the first major victory for the Demilitarize Brooklyn Navy Yard campaign, which has also targeted Crye Precision, a manufacturer specializing in military apparel.

Activists say they will continue pressing until all companies involved in supplying weapons to Israeli forces are removed, reflecting a broader expansion of solidarity with Palestine in the United States where outrage over alleged war crimes has increasingly translated into concrete demands to sever ties with arms manufacturers.