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The arms trade and armed conflict. An analysis of european weapons exports to countries in armed conflict

The arms trade and armed conflict. An analysis of European weapons exports to countries in armed conflict, a report by the Delàs Centre of Studies for Peace and the School for a Culture of Peace analyses arms exports by the member states of the EU during 2015 (the most recent year for which data is available) to countries which were involved in armed conflict in that same year. The report analyses weapons exports to 13 countries which were the setting for 16 armed conflicts, and offers an analysis of the context of each of the different struggles, referring to the recent history of each armed conflict, as well as to the most relevant concrete events which took place in 2015. In the context of an upsurge in arms trade exports from the EU, and at the same time, increasingly severe consequences for the civilian population – higher death tolls linked to these conflicts and a growing number of people forcibly displaced due to this violence – this report aims to enrich the public debate around the impacts that EU policies regulating the arms trade have on those countries that are the scene of armed conflict. At the same time, this report is also a tool to generate greater political commitment both at the Spanish level as well as on the European level with a specific agenda aimed at the control, reduction and elimination of arms exports to countries in armed conflict.



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The arms trade and armed conflict. An analysis of European arms exports to countries in armed conflict was prepared by the Delàs Centre of Studies for Peace and the School for a Culture of Peace

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Delàs Centre of Studies for Peace and the School for a Culture of Peace present *The arms trade and armed conflict. An analysis of European arms exports to countries in armed conflict*, a report of arms exports by member states of the EU to countries which are the setting for armed struggle. This report analyses the export of arms to 13 countries in a situation of armed conflict during 2015, countries which were on the list of the top 50 nations importing weapons from EU member countries. The goal of this publication is to contribute to the reduction of arms exports to countries in conflict by informing and mobilizing local and international citizenry. The report is part of a combined project of research and intervention carried out by the Delàs Centre of Studies for Peace and the School for a Culture of Peace, with the support of the Province of Barcelona. The data is intended to enrich the public debate around the impact that EU policies regarding arms trade have on the countries where armed conflicts are occurring. At the same time, *The arms trade and armed conflict. An analysis of European arms exports to countries in armed conflict*, is a tool to generate greater commitment from Spanish and EU leaders for a concrete agenda for the control, reduction, and the elimination of weapons exports to countries in armed conflict.

The current international legislation in matters of arms trade regulates the sale of weapons to countries affected by armed conflict. In the case of the EU, in December 2008, the EU adopted the Common Position, a judicially binding legislation governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment. The Common Position, which replaced the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports adopted by the Council in 1998, established that it was the responsibility of the member nation to verify the final destination of arms exports and confirm that the country importing the arms respected international humanitarian law. In that regard, criteria 3 refers to the internal situation of the country of final destination of the arms, and establishes that the member states will not permit exports which provoke or prolong armed conflicts or which worsen tensions of existing situations in the country which is the final destination of the weaponry. As well, in 2014, the Arms Trade Treaty came into effect, which obliges governments to guarantee that their weapons exports will not be used to commit human rights abuses, terrorism, violations of international humanitarian law or for international criminal organizations. Member states must evaluate their shipments of arms to guarantee that these criteria are fulfilled. This treaty introduces a perspective on gender in a very relevant way, with a clause relating to gender-based violence, obliging exporting nations to take into account whether the arms being sold will be used to commit or facilitate acts of gender violence such as violence against women and minors.

Given this legal framework and based on the fact that militarization and arms purchases are extremely important factors in the initiation, the extension and the escalation of armed conflicts, this report analyses 2015 European arms exports to countries which were in a situation of armed conflict. This is the most recent data available at the time of publishing.¹ In addition to analysing this data, the report also offers an analysis of the different conflicts being fought in the countries which received armed exports, including both to the recent history of each armed conflict as well as relevant events which occurred in 2015. The report, in this way, is a tool to improve the knowledge of

¹ Council of the EU (2017), *Eighteenth Annual Report according to Article 8(2) of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP defining common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment*.

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the destinations of European arms and their impact on the context of armed conflict, highlighting the consequences that these exports are causing in situations of armed conflict on a global level. In an international context in which the consequences of these conflicts are increasingly dire for the civilian population, as confirmed by the growing death toll, as well as the growing number of people forcibly displaced due to this violence, it is urgent to put an end to the arms trade and promote policies for the construction of peace and the defence of human rights, and to end the global arms trade, which represents a threat to the lives of millions.

CONCLUSIONS

- Weapons exports from member states of the EU in 2015 reached a record number of authorizations, duplicating those of the previous year. The exponential growth of weapons exports is most marked starting 2012, particularly that of the authorisations, with a growth rate of nearly 400%.
- The leading exporting nations are France, which authorised 77% of the disclosed exports. It is followed by the large military producer nations: the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and Germany.
- The Middle East has been the top destination region of European arms exports, receiving four of every ten authorisation for weapons exports (in terms of value) and which received 29% of the weapons and other European military production in 2015. An overview of the trend of exports, shows that arms transfers within the EU have reduced visibly, what was once the majority has now been replaced by a clear rise in exports to the Middle East and Asia, including Central Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia.
- There is a deep intensification of authorizations since 2014, which could mean enormous volumes of weapons exports in the coming years, particularly to regions suffering from armed conflict such as the Middle East and Asia.
- 13 of the 50 top purchasing nations of European weapons exports were involved in at least one armed conflict in 2015 (Egypt, India, Turkey, Iraq, Thailand, Algeria, Pakistan, China, Israel, Ukraine, Nigeria and Colombia). These 13 countries were the setting for 16 armed conflicts.
- Five of the 11 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2015 happened in countries which are currently among the 50 top purchasing nations of European weapons exports: Nigeria, Pakistan, Ukraine, Egypt, and Iraq.
- 10 of the 13 armed conflicts in countries among the 50 top purchasing nations of EU arms exports had opposition to the nations government, or the political, social or ideological system among their root causes.
- Among the purchasing nations of EU arms exports are countries which had the greatest numbers of internally displaced peoples in 2015, such as Colombia, Iraq, Nigeria, and Pakistan.
- Seven of the armed conflicts which occurred in countries with high or very high levels of gender discrimination: Iraq, India (Assam), India (Jammu and Kashmir), India (CPI-M), Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), and Nigeria were also among the top importers of weapons produced in EU member countries.
- Three armed conflicts which were the setting for sexual violence related to armed conflict - as reported by the Secretary General of the UN - occurred in countries which were among the top 50 importers of EU weapons.

SCHOOL FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE (UAB)

The School for a Culture of Peace (Escola de Cultura de Pau - ECP) is an academic institution of investigation for peace located in the Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). It was created in 1999 with the goal of promoting the culture of peace through activities of research, peace processes, parallel diplomacy, education, and informing the public. The main areas of investigation include conflict analysis, peace processes, gender, human rights and transitional justice, and peace education.

To meet these objectives the ECP focuses its work in the following areas:

- Research. The main areas of investigation of the ECP include armed conflict and sociopolitical crisis, peace processes, human rights and transitional justice, the gender dimension, and peace education.
- Parallel diplomacy. The ECP promotes dialogue and the transformation of conflict through initiatives of parallel diplomacy, including facilitation with armed actors.
- Consulting services. The ECP offers consulting service on conflict, peacebuilding and peace education for different types of local and international actors
- Education and training. The investigative personnel of the ECP offer graduate and post-graduate courses in Catalan universities, including a Diploma in the Culture of Peace, the postgraduate title that the ECP offers in the UAB. As well, they offer classes and workshops on specific topics, such as educating for peace and in conflict, and conflict awareness training.
- Awareness. The ECP promotes awareness through activities directed at Catalan and Spanish societies, as well as collaborations with the news media.

DELÀS CENTRE OF STUDIES FOR PEACE

The J.M. Delàs Centre of Studies for Peace (Centre d'Estudis per la Pau J.M. Delàs) is an independent organisation analysing peace, security, defence, and the arms trade. The Centre is dedicated to political and social research and action to strengthen the culture of peace and the construction of a disarmed society, making people aware of the negative effects of arms proliferation and militarism. The main areas of research are the arms trade, the financing of the arms industry, military expenditure, weapons research and development (R&D), and military operations abroad.

The Delàs Centre was born in 1999 in Justícia i Pau (Justice and Peace), as a continuation of work within the Campaign against the Arms Trade – C3A which started in 1988. Since February 2010 it is an independent research centre on issues related to disarmament and peace.

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