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# The arms trade and conflict. An analysis of european weapons exports to countries in situations of tension

*The arms trade and conflict. An analysis of European weapons exports to countries in situations of tension* is a report by the Delàs Centre of Studies for Peace and the School for a Culture of Peace. The report analyses arms exports by the member states of the EU during 2015 (the most recent year for which data is available) to countries in a situation of socio-political tension in that same year. The report analyses arms exports to 20 countries which were the setting of 28 tense situations, offering an analysis of the context of the different tensions, including both the recent history of each situation, as well as the relevant events which occurred in 2015. In the context of an upsurge in arms trade exports from the EU, and at the same time, increasingly severe consequences of these tensions upon the population, this report hopes to enrich the public debate around the impact that the arms trade policies of the EU have on countries whose people are the victims of situations of socio-political tension, as well as those who are victims 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 tension and/or in armed conflict.

This report is the second in a series published by the Delàs Centre of Studies for Peace and the School for a Culture of Peace, whose first number is titled *The arms trade and armed conflict. An analysis of European weapons exports to countries in armed conflict*.



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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 conflict. An analysis of European arms exports to countries in situations of tension*. This report, the second in a series of collaborations between the two research centres, analyses EU arms exports to countries which were the setting for socio-political tension in the year of 2015. The first report analysed exports to countries in armed conflict. This report analyses the situation of the 20 countries which were a setting for socio-political tension in 2015, and were also among the top 50 recipients of EU arms exports during the same year. Through these publications, the Delàs Centre of Studies for Peace and the School for a Culture of Peace hope to enrich the public debate and social concern for the impact that EU arms exports have on countries around the world whose people are the victims of situations of socio-political tension, as well as those who are victims 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 or in a situation of socio-political tension.

In 2015, there were some 83 situations of tension in the world. The 20 countries analysed in this report are the setting for 29 of these tensions, as some countries are the setting for more than one different situation of tension. Other tensions were of an international character, implicating more than one State. It should be noted that a large number of these socio-political tensions were also linked to serious human rights violations. Despite this context and the legislation in force overseeing the arms trade which restricts the sale of arms to countries affected by situations of socio-political tension, and taking into account a criteria around human rights and international humanitarian law, the member states of the EU turned a deaf ear to these laws and authorised the production and export of weapons in clear breach of the law. Criterion 2 of article 2 of the 2008 EU Common Position for the control of the export of military technology and equipment established clear restrictions on the arms trade to those countries in which there is a risk that exports might be used for internal repression or in which international organisations have established human rights violations. Criterion 3 establishes that member states shall deny an export licence for military technology or equipment which would provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions or conflicts in the country of final destination. 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. Signatories 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.

With this report, together with that published in 2017, it is hoped to better inform the public and the individuals responsible for public policy on the arms trade and on the prevention or expansion of conflict, a tool of analysis of the arms exports that were carried out in 2015. This is hoped to allow a better knowledge of the political context of the countries with situations of internal tension importing arms originating in the EU. This tool is all the more necessary in the light of the serious impact of the arms trade and its role in the deepening of political crises and of the human rights abuses. The goal is to contribute to the end of this lethal business.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Twenty of the forty main importers of arms originating in the EU had situations of socio-political tension in 2015 (Morocco, Nigeria, Mexico, Peru, South Korea, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Serbia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and Lebanon). These twenty countries were the settings of 29 different situations of tension, some of them of an international scope.
- Three of the five main importers of arms originating in the EU had situations of tensions in 2015, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and India. Saudi Arabia was the main destination for European arms shipments.
- The countries of the EU of from which the majority of the arms were exported to countries in tension during 2015 were: France, Spain, United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, Holland, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Portugal, and Romania.
- Nine of the eighteen high-intensity situations of tension in 2015 were in countries which were among the fifty main recipients of arms originating in the EU: Nigeria, India (Manipur and India-Pakistan), Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Egypt, Israel, and Lebanon.
- Nine countries in a tense situation were also the setting for active armed conflicts in 2015 (Nigeria, China, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Russia, Iraq, Israel), a total of 12 armed conflicts, for which the situation in these countries is of particular seriousness in terms of the impacts of the violence.
- Several countries in tension importing arms from the EU were among the countries with the largest number of internally displaced people in 2015, such as Iraq, Nigeria, and Pakistan.
- Seven of the situations of socio-political tension which took place in countries among the fifty main importers of EU weaponry were also found in countries with high or very high levels of gender discrimination according to the SIGI gender equality index of the OECD (Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon).

## 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.

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## 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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