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

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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*.



2018

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.

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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.

2. Situations of tension in 2015 in countries which imported arms from EU member states

Situations of tension and recipients of EU arms imports en 2015		
AFRICA	ASIA	MIDDLE EAST
Angola (Cabinda)	Bangladesh	Bahrain
Burkina Faso	China (Tibet)	Egypt
Cameroon	China – Japan	Iran (northeast)
Central Africa (LRA)	India (Manipur)	Iran (Sistan Baluchestan)
Chad	India (Nagaland)	Iran – USA, Israel
Congo	India – Pakistan	Iraq (Kurdistan)
Djibouti	Indonesia (West Papua)	Israel – Syria – Lebanon
DRC	Indonesia (Aceh)	Lebanon
DRC – Rwanda	Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea	Palestine
DRC – Uganda	Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	Saudi Arabia
Equatorial Guinea	Kyrgyzstan	Yemen (south)
Eritrea	Myanmar	
Eritrea – Ethiopia	Nepal	
Ethiopia	Pakistan	
Ethiopia (Oromia)	Philippines (Mindanao)	
Gambia	Sri Lanka	
Guinea	Thailand	
Guinea-Bissau	Thailand – Cambodia	
Ivory Coast	Tajikistan	
Kenya	Uzbekistan	
Lesotho		
Madagascar		
Morocco – Western Sahara		
Mauritania		
Mozambique		
Niger		
Nigeria		
Nigeria (Niger Delta)		
Rwanda		
Senegal (Casamance)		
Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland)		
Sudan		
Sudan – South Sudan		
Tunisia		
Uganda		
Zimbabwe		
		EUROPE
		Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabaj)
		Bosnia y Herzegovina
		Cyprus
		Georgia (Abkhazia)
		Georgia (South Ossetia)
		Macedonia
		Moldova, Rep. of (Transnistria)
		Russia (Chechnya)
		Russia (Ingushetia)
		Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria)
		Serbia – Kosovo
		AMERICAS
		Bolivia
		Haiti
		Mexico
		Peru
		Venezuela

In **bold** are the situations of tension in countries which import arms produced in EU member states. Source: School of the Culture of Peace, Alert 2016! Report on conflicts, human rights, and peacebuilding, 2016. Icaria: Barcelona; European Network Against Arms Trade; and *Official Journal of the European Union annual reports on the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports*.

During 2015 there were 83 cases of socio-political crisis in the world, aside from the 35 cases of open armed conflict.¹ The majority of these situations of tension happened on the African continent, which was the setting for 36 crises, followed by Asia, with 20 case, the Middle East and Europe, with 11 cases each, and the Americas with only five tense situations. It is worth noting that more than 20% of the tense situations of 2015 were of high intensity, with high levels of violence and instability, with some of these being among the countries receiving arms from EU member states: Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Egypt, Israel, and Lebanon.

1. This report uses the definition of socio-political crisis used by the School of Culture of Peace, which establishes socio-political crisis as “a situation where the pursuit of specific objectives or a failure to satisfy certain demands by different parties leads to high levels of political and social mobilization and/or the use of violence that does not reach the level of armed conflict and may include fighting, repression, coups d’état, bombings or attacks. If escalated, these situations could degenerate into an armed conflict under certain circumstances. Socio-political crises are normally linked to: a) demands for self-determination and self government, or identity issues; b) opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a State, or the internal or international policies of a government, which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or c) control over the resources or the territory.”

8 THE ARMS TRADE AND CONFLICT.
AN ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN WEAPONS EXPORTS TO COUNTRIES IN SITUATIONS OF TENSION

Countries in situations of tension among the 50 main importers of weapons originating in the EU			
Arms importing country	Tense situation that was active in 2015	Volume of EU arms imports*	Position in the ranking of imports
AFRICA			
Morocco	Morocco – Western Sahara	2.483.219.518	19
Nigeria	Nigeria	564.221.052	45
	Nigeria (Niger Delta)		
ASIA			
Rep. of Korea	Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea	2.409.002.855	20
	Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea		
China	China (Tibet)	1.303.584.122	32
	China – Japan		
India	India (Manipur)	15.180.179.129	4
	India (Nagaland)		
	India - Pakistan		
Japan	Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea	1.947.711.836	26
	China – Japan		
Pakistan	Pakistan	1.918.756.103	27
Thailand	Thailand	2.260.146.001	22
	Thailand – Cambodia		
Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	688.038.950	41
AMERICAS			
Mexico	Mexico	2.775.282.012	15
Peru	Peru	1.135.958.779	35
EUROPE			
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan	938.103.293	39
Russia	Russia (Chechnya)	1.039.519.830	36
	Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria)		
	Russia (Ingushetia)		
Serbia	Serbia- Kosovo	657.975.224	43
MIDDLE EAST			
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia	22.241.829.866	1
Egypt	Egypt	19.477.824.206	2
Iraq	Iraq (Kurdistan)	2.281.079.174	21
Israel	Israel – Syria – Lebanon	966.901.248	37
Lebanon	Lebanon	1.546.114.580	30
	Israel – Syria – Lebanon		

Source: the authors, with data from the School for a Culture of Peace, *Alert 2016! Report on conflicts, human rights, and peacebuilding, 2016*. Icaria: Barcelona; European Network Against the Arms Trade; and the 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 (2017/C 153/01), in the Official Journal of the European Union, C153/1 from 16 May 2017.

*Millions de euros

2.1. AFRICA

MOROCCO

Overview of the situation:

For decades tension has gripped Morocco over the disputed territory of Western Sahara, which has its beginnings in the end of Spanish colonial domination of the region. The agreement to distribute the territory between Morocco and Mauritania without taking into account assurances of a referendum for independence in the region nor the right of self-determination for the Sahrawi population led to the annexation of most of the territory by Morocco and the forced displacement of thousands of Sahrawis, who wound up settling in refugee camps in the south of Algeria. In this context, in 1976 the nationalist movement Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (POLISARIO) declared the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and entered into armed conflict with Morocco. After years of hostilities, both parties agreed to mediation by the UN, which deployed a mission in 1991 (MINIURSO) to supervise the cease-fire and organize a consultation for self-determination in the territory which has not been carried out. In the framework of the negotiation process, Morocco has insisted on offering a plan of limited autonomy for Western Sahara, but the Polisario Front insists on the need to hold a referendum which considers the option of Sahrawi independence. The UN, continues to consider Western Sahara as a not autonomous non-decolonised territory.

Developments of 2015

During 2015 the tension remained high in Western Sahara between Morocco and the Polisario Front, a long-standing dispute which has been going on for over 40 years to date. The possibility for a solution to the conflict continues to run aground due to persistent blockades of the negotiation process. This situation led the secretary general of the UN to make a new call for both sides to renew efforts to find a negotiated solution out of the status quo and to reduce the risk that the situation could lead to even greater instability due to people's frustration, particularly that of the Sahrawi. The diplomatic process was affected by Morocco's criticisms of the 2014 UN report on the question of Western Sahara and by the questioning by Rabat of the approach adopted by the international organisation for the negotiations. Disagreements on the part of Moroccan authorities with the methods of the UN led to measures which affected the deployment of some of the high officials within MINIURSO, a question that was only resolved through direct contact between the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, and the King of Morocco. In this context, the special envoy of the Secretary General of the UN, Christopher Ross, made three trips to the region during 2015, but these attempts did not lead to advances nor did representatives of Morocco and the Polisario Front resume face-to-face talks. It was revealed that Rabat insisted in having Algeria join the negotiation process, but the Government of Algiers remained reluctant to this

possibility. In the frame of the 40th anniversary of the Green March, King Mohammed VI visited the territories of Western Sahara under Moroccan control and insisted that the most that Rabat could offer would be an autonomous status. The leader of the Polisario Front, meanwhile, described the discourse of the monarch as a provocation and emphasised that the organisation wouldn't rule out a return to armed struggle.

For the whole of 2015, humans right organisations once again warned of human rights violations to the Sahrawi population in Morocco. A report of Amnesty International condemned 173 cases of torture in Morocco and Western Sahara as the result of an investigation carried out between 2013 and 2014. The NGO warned of practices such as beatings, stress positions, asphyxiation, simulated drowning, psychological and sexual violence – torture with the intention of crushing dissent. The collection of testimonies included cases of people detained in Laayoune. According to Amnesty International, the accusations are not being investigated with sufficient diligence by the Moroccan judicial authorities, and on the contrary, in some cases led to charges against those denouncing the abuses and torture. The Moroccan authorities rejected the report as biased.

During 2015, and as in previous years, there were also some Sahrawi demonstrations in territories under Moroccan control, both within Laayoune as well as in other areas, with the goal of airing concerns related to human rights, socio-economic issues, and political recognition. International human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch emphasised that the authorities systematically adopted measures to prevent expressions of support for the self-determination of Western Sahara, including massive deployments of police forces to suppress public gatherings. As well, Morocco deported a number of foreign visitors participating in observation missions, the majority of whom were European citizens sympathetic to the Sahrawi cause. In contrast to these measures, the government did give a green light to the creation of the Sahrawi Association of Victims of Grave Human Rights Violations Committed by the Moroccan State nine years after the entity applied for legal recognition and eight years after a tribunal concluded that the authorities had incorrectly vetoed its recognition.

In parallel, it is worth noting that the conditions of life of the Sahrawi population living in the refugee camps in southern Algeria only grew worse, a consequence of decreasing international aid, high levels of unemployment, and a reduction of shipments. Additionally it is worth mentioning

that the conflict for control of the exploitation of the natural resources of the territory continues. In this context, it's worth noting the verdict of the European Court of Justice which nullified the 2012 business agreement between the EU and Morocco for inclusion of resources from Western Sahara.

Arms Exports

In 2015, Morocco was one of the three main African weapons importers, and purchased defence materials valued at more than 48 million euros. At the same time, it was the main destination of weapons from France in the region, which is reflected in the authorisations granted for weapons exports in North Africa, with Morocco making up 2.3 billion of the 2.5 billion in approved exports to the region.

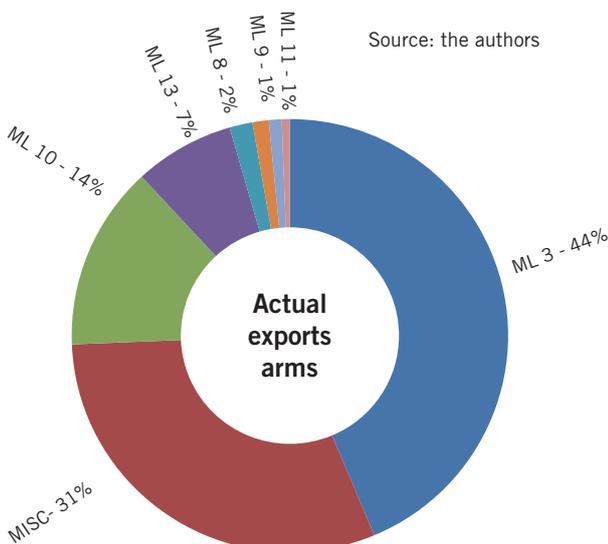
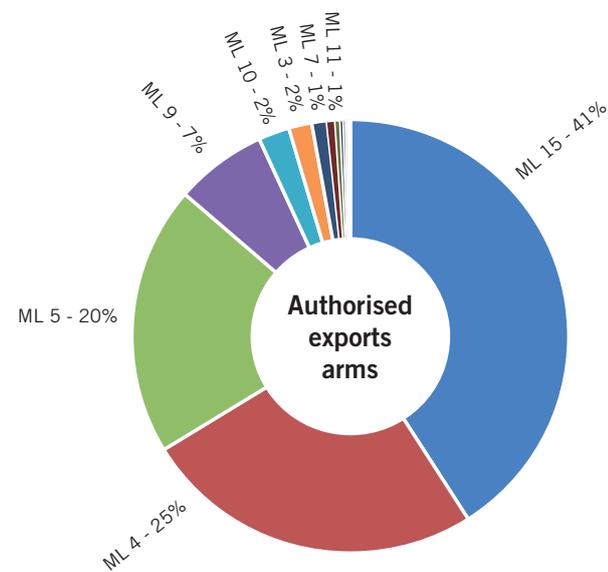
As regards the actual exports, the categories correspond mainly to ammunition, which made up more than €21 million, as well as the categories

of Miscellaneous, which includes unknown and unlisted categories, warplanes, tanks, explosives, and warships, which mainly have their origins in Spain, France, Bulgaria, and Portugal.

NIGERIA

Overview of the situation:

Nigeria, the political and economic giant of Africa, with more than 20% of the sub-Saharan population and the main producer of oil and gas on the continent, is troubled by a lack of governability. Since its independence in 1960, it has been characterised by alternating military and civilian governments – the latter often short-lived – which have provoked continuous instability and a lack of governance. In 1999, political power returned to civilian hands, but there continue to be serious challenges to effective governance in the country, large social and economic differences between social strata and between the individual states that make up Nigeria, a lack of transparency, and permanent corruption, all of which are a burden on the country and which feed a climate of discrimination and grievances between regions and communities. As well, the country is facing a number of security challenges related to the use of religious, ethnic, and social divisions for political advantage, as well as the competition for natural resources. There are four such challenges: Boko Haram, a Islamist insurgency in the northeast; the Niger Delta – the main source of the country's resources – where instability persists after years of conflict; the resurgence of the Biafran secessionist movement in the southeast, and finally, the increase in the inter-community violence in the middle belt between the agricultural communities of the central south and the Muslim Hausa-Fulani herding communities from the north. This latter conflict is centred on access and control of lands and water resources. The reduction and even the restriction of the areas set aside for pasture, which are administered by the state governments, have only exacerbated hostilities.



Source: the authors

Developments of 2015

The political situation and the security of the country were affected by various factors in 2015: the conflict in the northeast of the country pitting armed forces against **the insurgent Islamist group Boko Haram (BH)**, the increase in tension associated with the **various elections** that took place during the first half of the year, **the inter-community violence in different regions of the country**, and the **increase in political unrest in the southeast regions of the Niger Delta**. BH was responsible for numerous attacks and suicide bombings against civilian infrastructures, indiscriminate assassination and clashes with the Nigerian as well as neighbouring State security forces, above all in Borno, the epicentre of the violence, but also in Adamawa, Yobe and Gombe, as well as in the neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Boko Haram used minors and women to carry out suicide bombings. As regards the conflict in the north of Nigeria, which also brings to light the levels of corruption in the country related to the arms trade, particularly notable was the 2015

arrest of the Counsellor of National Security of the Muhammadu Buhari government, Sambo Dasuki, for allegedly embezzling 2 billion dollars in fake contracts for the purchase of 12 helicopters, 4 fighter planes, and ammunition, material which was to be used in the fight against BH. In January 2015, the prior anti-corruption czar and candidate for the ruling PDP party in the Adamawa state, Nuhu Ribadu, had declared that the Nigerian government was forced to buy arms on the black market in order to combat BH because the West refused to offer military aid to the Army due to the high levels of existing corruption and the likelihood of such acquisitions being diverted. Suspicions of black market purchases by Nigeria were raised in September of 2014, when South Africa detained a plane carrying \$9.3 million in cash, allegedly destined for illicit weapons purchases.

The conflict in the north had consequences on the entire country, such as the intensification of activity in the North by security forces, reducing the deployment of police and armed forces to provide support during the elections, which undermined the security of the process. Up to this time, pre-electoral violence had already meant clashes between supporters of rival parties and several incidents had already resulted in dozens of deaths. On March 28th, presidential elections were held, which were won by a candidate from the All Progressives Congress (APC) opposition party, the ex-general Muhammadu Buhari, who received nearly 15 million votes (52.4% of the votes that were cast), while the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan, from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) came in second with around 13 million votes (43.7% of the votes cast), while the third place winner received only 53,000 votes. The electoral process was recognized as transparent and valid from different internal, regional and international monitoring organizations (INEC, ECOWAS, EU, Commonwealth, UA). The victory of Buhari was publicly recognized on March 31st by outgoing president Jonathan and made official on April 1st, converting Buhari in the first opposition candidate who had been able to win in presidential elections, ending 16 years of PDP governance. The transfer of executive power was peaceful, by means of an agreement to prevent violence signed on March 26th between Jonathan and Buhari, in which both leaders committed to avoid repeating scenarios of violence from past elections. The new president also sent a message of national reconciliation, urging all forces to work towards the same goals. After national elections, the country again called for elections to choose the governors of the individual states and of the national assembly on April 11th and 25th, respectively. Again the APC won in 20 of the 29 states which held elections. During the

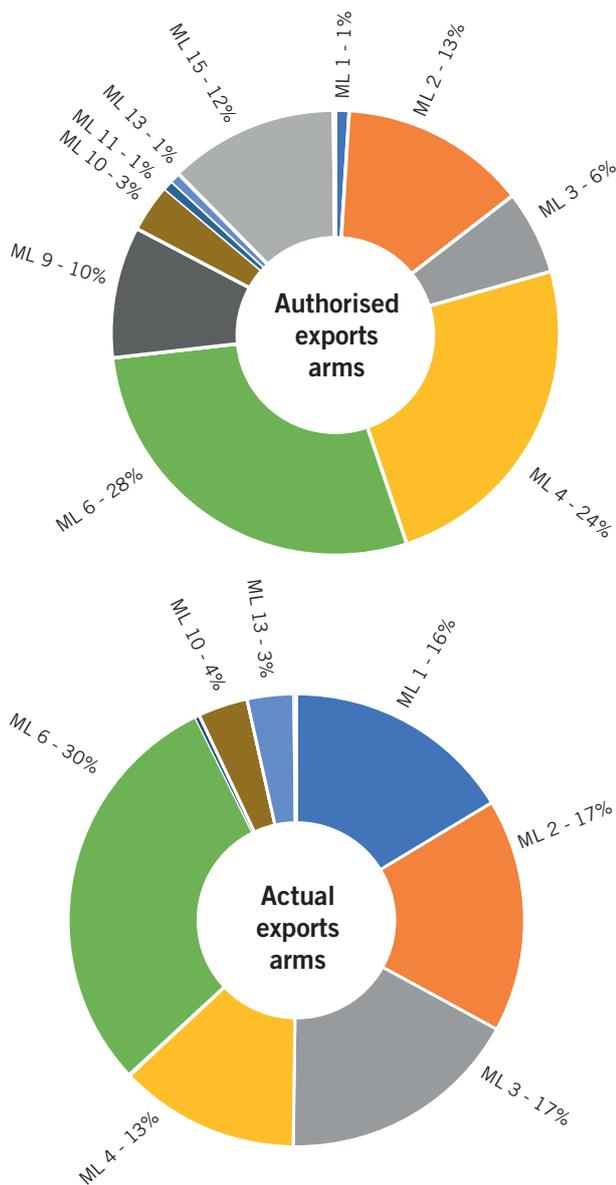
elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) counted a total of 66 violent incidents in the country, and the NHRC reported 55 assassinations, and another 200 deaths due to violence before and after the elections.

Alongside the tense political situation generated by the electoral race, inter-community violence continued to affect some regions of the country. The 2015 edition of the annual Global Terrorism Index (GTI),² placed Nigeria third out of 163 countries in terms of levels of violence. In addition to Boko Haram – considered by the GTI as the most deadly group in the world in 2014 – the violence of militias and herders from the Fulani community against other militias and security forces led to 1,229 deaths in 2014, compared to 63 deaths in 2013. During 2015 – though the definitive data is not yet released – the violence was lower than 2014, but continued to be present in the country. On the other hand, and in what could be considered the most deadly attack of the year, the December clashes between the Army and members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) in Zaria, the state of Kaduna, left around 100 dead and provoked numerous protests in northern states. Finally, during the last months of the year, the situation in the Biafran secessionist states in the southeast of the country flared up, due to the October 19th arrest of Nnamdi Nwannekaenyi Kanu, the leader of the independentist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and director of Radio Biafra. He was accused with sedition, inciting ethnic hatred, and treason, charges which could lead to the death penalty. His arrest, together with the arrests of other followers, generated numerous protests in the region, protests which led to violence on December 2nd, causing the death of eight demonstrators and two police in the blockade of the Niger Bridge in Onitsha, the state of Anambra. The Supreme Court issued an immediate call for Kanu's release on the 17th of December, but the government of Muhammadu Buhari presented new charges to prevent him from being freed.

Arms Exports

For Nigeria in 2015, the total purchase of European arms was over €35 million. The largest categories were armoured vehicles, tanks, ammunition, light arms and artillery, explosives, and warships. Regarding the authorized exports, these rose to over 566 million euros among the same categories. The main European providers are France, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Poland.

2. The Institute for Economics and Peace, *2015 Global Terrorism Index*, November 2015.



Source: the authors

2.2. AMERICAS

MEXICO

Overview of the situation:

Since 2006 when President Felipe Calderón started the so-called “Mexican Drug War”, both the levels of violence as well as human rights violations in the entire country worsened substantially, which put the country in the list of those with the highest number of homicides in the world. Since then, the number of organized criminal groups associated with the drug trade has multiplied, in some areas eclipsing the state in terms of the monopoly on violence. According to some estimates, a the end of 2017 the “Drug War” had caused more than 150,000 deaths and more than 30,000 disappearances. As well, in Mexico there are some insurgent movements in states like Guerrero and Oaxaca – among them the EPR, the ERPI or the FAR-LP. In the state of Chiapas, after the armed uprising of the EZLN in 1994 which led to the San Andrés Accords (1996), there have been certain levels of conflict in Zapatista communities.

Developments of 2015

In 2015, the levels of violence in Mexico remained high. The number of criminal homicides grew noticeably compared to the previous year and the government warned of the seriousness of the activity of organised crime in several states, particularly Guerrero, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Morelos, and Baja California. It’s worth noting that a report from the Social Studies and Public Opinion Center (CESOP), of the Chamber of Deputies compiled from public data, which informs that the drug cartels in Mexico have large calibre, precision weapons, as well as the latest generation of firearms. The report points out that the best armed cartels are Los Zetas (44.8% of the arms), the Gulf Cartel (22.7%), Los Beltran Leyva (10.2%) The Sinaloa Cartel (8.1%), Arellano Félix (7.6%), Michoacan Family (1.6%), Los Jabalines, Los Pelones, and the Pacific Cartel (1% each), La Línea (0.8%) and Carrillo Fuentes (0.3%). Previously another report from CESOP estimated that there were more than 15 million illegal weapons circulating in the country. 80% of those arms had entered Mexico from the US, while the rest had probably arrived from Central American borders. On this matter, the report pointed out that only 14% of the 252,000 arms that illegally enter the country from the US border each year are confiscated. It is also worth pointing out that two out of every three arms used in crimes in Mexico are imported legally from the US. Thus in the period between 2010 and 2012, the traffic of arms from the US to Mexico generated profits on the order of \$127 million, four times more than the period from 1997 to 1999. Along the same lines, a report from the BBC published in May 2015 maintained that the states on the border of the US there are some 8,000 gun shops, numerous arms fairs, and second hand shops in which it is relatively easy to buy arms. Finally, the report of the CESOP also points out that in Mexico there are some 8,000 private security agencies, of which only 8% are registered with the government.

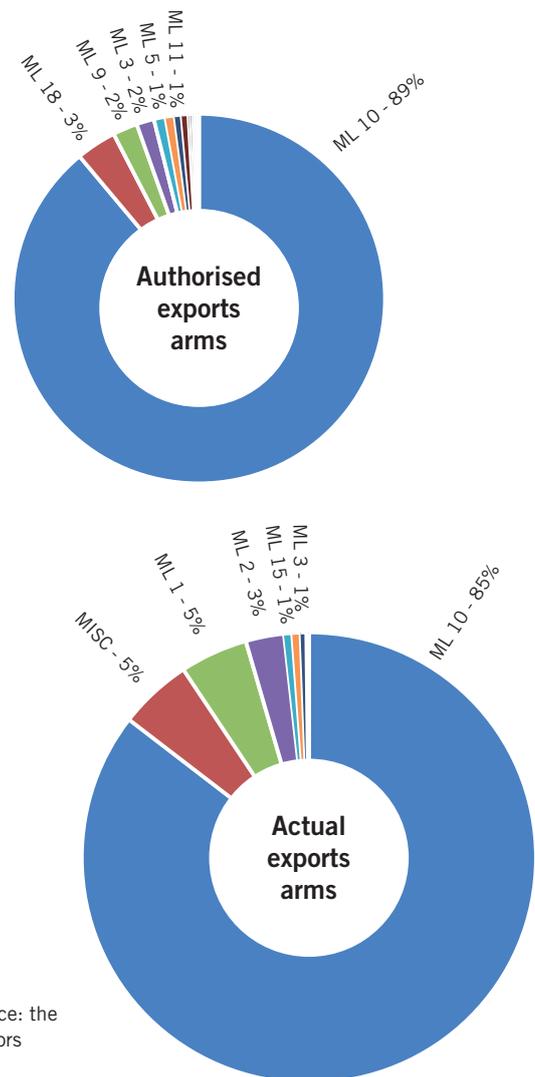
What’s more, since the first anniversary of the disappearance in September 2014 of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College in Iguala (Guerrero) – protests in which 6 people were assassinated and more than 20 wounded – there have been numerous social mobilisations and condemnations of human rights violations and forced disappearances. The well-known Miguel Pro Human Rights Center pointed out that in the last 8 years there have been more than 26,000 cases of forced disappearances in the country, nearly half during the current administration of President Peña Nieto, which began in December 2012. Human Rights Watch (HRW) corroborated these numbers, giving a margin of error of between

22,000 and 25,500 people according to data taken from the National Registry of Disappeared or Missing Persons. The government did not recognise before the UN Committee that the country did not have a unified register of forced disappearances, but informed that during the current legislature it was foreseen that the General Law on Enforced Disappearances would be approved – to comply with the constitutional reform to article 73, approved by the congress in September 2013, and that it would report statistical data on the forced disappearances recorded in the country from 1960 to February 2015. With regards to the previously mentioned disappearance of 43 students of Ayotzinapa, by the end of the year there was still no evidence of their whereabouts, but the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) named by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States (OAS) presented a report in September, a different version of events than that those claimed by the Mexican Attorney General's office, which showed that at different times of the operation, various police forces and the Army had also played a part. Given the lack of results of the government investigation and pressure from human rights groups and family members of the disappeared, the GIEI urged the Mexican authorities to reopen the investigation based on new evidence. As well, the assassination of a journalist and four women in the capitol in July, led to widespread protests calling for improved human rights in the country, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Mexican National Human Rights Commission condemned the multiple homicide and called for stronger protections for members of the press. According to statistics by the Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Journalists, Veracruz was the state with the most journalists murdered (11) and disappeared, along with Chihuahua, according to Article 19, an international group for the protection of journalists.

Arms Exports

The case for a moratorium on arms exports to Mexico is particularly relevant, for the reasons already expressed, and because it represents a violation of article 11 of the International Arms Trade Control Treaty, ratified by the country in September of 2014, which shows that each state must take measures to prevent the diversion of weapons. In this sense, official sources report that 15,000 firearms have been lost in the last eight years. Small arms were the third largest category of weapons exports to Mexico in 2015, for a value of over €8 million. Licenses were approved for exports for more than €16 million.

All told, in 2015 Mexico received licenses for importation of arms for the value of €2.78 billion, 89% of which were for the purchase of warplanes, which accounted for almost €2.48 billion. This same percentage was represented in the actual exports, where military aircraft accounted for 85% of the total weaponry imported by Mexico in this period, as well as Miscellaneous, small arms, and artillery. Along with France, the main arms exporting EU nations were the United Kingdom, Spain, and Belgium.



Source: the authors

PERU

Overview of the situation:

In 1980, at the beginning of the transition to democracy in Peru, an armed conflict began between the government and the Maoist Shining Path, which continued for two decades and resulted in the deaths and disappearances of nearly 70,000 people. Under the cover of policies of counterinsurgency, in the 1990's the state suffered from a drift to authoritarianism under Alberto Fujimori, who in 2000 was exiled to Japan after being deposed by congress and accused of multiple charges of corruption and human

rights violations. Despite agreement among most analysts of the demise of the Shining Path after the capture of Abimael Guzmán in 1992, since the start of the 21st century, remaining factions of the Shining Path who claim to be heirs of the Communist Party increased their activities significantly in the regions of Alto Huallaga, and especially, the valley of the Apurímac, Ene and Mantaro rivers (VRAEM). The government associates the Shining Path with the drug trade and denies that it has any sort of political agenda or program, and has refused to negotiate or enter into dialogue with the organization, while intensifying military operations in both regions, as well as the political and legal struggle against Movadef, a political party aligned with the Shining Path. On the other hand, various collectives, particularly those of indigenous people, have frequently protested the economic politics of the successive governments and the activity of the extractive corporations.

Developments of 2015

Alongside the various episodes of violence that were produced in multiple parts of the country during protests against the activities of extractive corporations, the armed conflict between the armed forces and the remaining factions of the Shining Path (SP) continued, although it was relatively free from outbreaks of violence. The group was weakened by an increase in military deployment of the Army. As for the protests against the extractive corporations, it is worth noting the state of emergency in Arequipa, in the Ilay province, which for 60 days placed a moratorium on movements, transport, and gatherings after the protests against the Southern Copper Corporation's Tía María mining project which left three dead and more than 200 wounded. The local population responded, insisting that they would not stop protesting until the Tía María mining project was cancelled for good. The government declared a state of emergency on July 22, but was delayed in deploying armed forces until Sept 20. By the start of the year, the US-Mexican Southern Copper Corporation reported cancelling a project to extract copper in the south of the country, due to the opposition of a large part of the local population and clashes between the police and dozens of people in the town of Pichanaki (Junín province) who were protesting the presence of prospectors from Pluspetrol, an Argentinian company, protests which left one person dead and 40 with gunshot wounds. Afterwards, the ministry of the Interior was removed from his post after having denied that the police would use firearms to put down the protest. In another mining conflict during August, one person died and another 50 were wounded during clashes between police and hundreds of workers from a Doe Run metals plant who blocked the main road through the centre of the country, in response to which the army was deployed in the Yauli province, in the Andean region of Junín. Shortly afterwards, at the end of

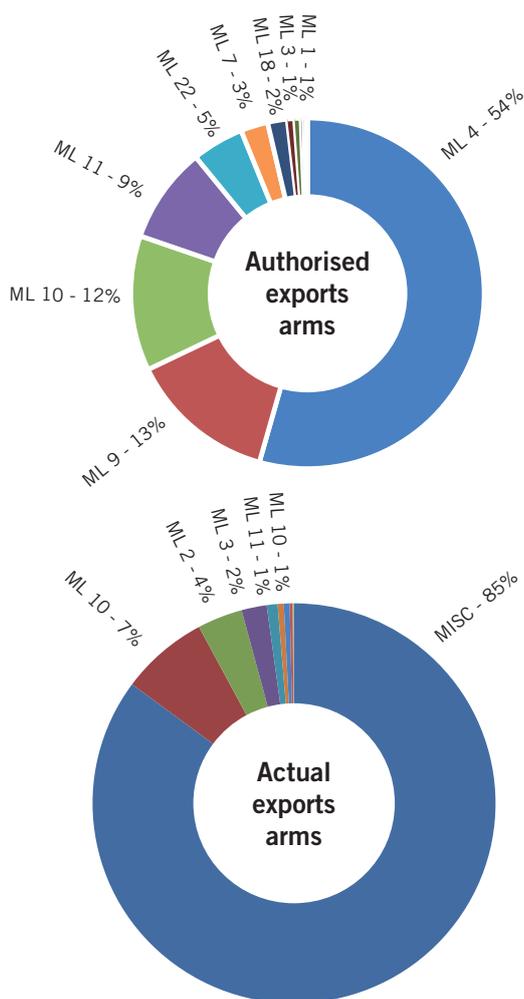
September another 4 people died in the province of Cotabambas and Grau (the southeast region of Apurímac) as a consequence of the protests against the Las Bambas mining project, which has estimated reserves of 6.9 million tons of copper and 10.5 million tons of mineral resources, and could become one of the largest copper mines in the world. The Defence Front for the Interests and Development of Cotabambas said the protests were justified due to fears of their lands being affected, the the government had rejected a suspension of the project despite revelations that the Chinese-Australian MMG had modified the environmental impact study.

What is more, during the year there were no significant incidents of violence between Armed Forces and the remaining factions of Shining Path (SP), although military exercises against the guerrillas weakened the armed organisation. During the first half of the year, various alleged SP members were arrested, but the most significant blow to the armed organisation was the dismantling in August of a column of the armed group in the south of the La Convención region (Cuzco region), including the capture of two main operatives in the VRAEM, Alexander Alarcón Soto, "comrade Renán" and Dionisio Ramos, "comrade Yuri". In another military operation against another column of SP in VRAEM in September, local media reported the deaths of five guerrilla fighters, among them was said to be number four of the Central Committee, "Comrade Antonio". Official sources reported that SP still had 60 combatants in the VRAEM area, between the north of Cuzco and the central jungle of the country, commanded by the brothers José and Raúl Quispe Palomino, who according to the Peruvian authorities, represented the last active column of the group. These supposed leaders of the organisation, together with Florindo Eleutorio Flores, also known as "Artemio", were put on the US Treasury Department's Kingpin list (a blacklist for cartels and dealers of the international drug trade) where SP is also listed as a criminal "narco-terrorist" organisation. In reaction to this action, Alfredo Crespo, the lawyer who defended the armed organisation and its leader, Abimael Guzmán, rejected the term narco-terrorist and assured that these leaders did not form part of the organisation, but rather a dissident faction opposed to Guzmán which operates in the VRAEM. What's more, in July, the police reported the rescue of 39 people – 26 children and 13 women supposedly kidnapped by the group in the region of the VRAEM. As well, the government declared that the armed group was holding another 170 to 200 hostages, 70 or 80 of whom were minors. Finally, the government reported in the middle of the year that given the increase in the use of explosives

and military weaponry by organised crime, in September a couple of laws were introduced into parliament to treat crimes committed with these types of weaponry as terrorism. In January, the law “Firearms, munitions, explosives, fireworks and related materials of civilian use.” was passed, updating the legislation on arms and explosives which had been unchanged for 20 and 40 years, respectively.

Arms Exports

In 2015, firearms imports for civilian use in Peru grew 30% from the previous year. In terms of categories, in 2015 export licenses for €1.14 billion were granted, of which €6.5 million were in the category of small arms, although the types of weaponry which were most requested were explosive devices and rockets, warships, warplanes, light arms, artillery and munitions. The main countries which provided arms to Peru were France, Italy, Holland, and Spain.



Source: the authors

2.3. ASIA

SOUTH KOREA

Overview of the situation:

After the end of the Second World War and the occupation of the Korean peninsula by Soviet troops (north) and US troops (south), the country was divided in two. The Korean War (1950-53) ended with an armistice – in which, technically speaking, the two countries were still at war – and which established a de facto border along the 38th parallel. Already in the 1970s initial dialogues had discussed reunification, on various occasions there had been postures of reconciliation, and although various measures had been put in place to increase confidence, both countries continue to make threats of a return to war. In fact, in the last decades there have been several armed incidents, both on the common border between the two countries (one of the most militarised areas in the world) as well as in the maritime borders of the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan. Also, in the last years, the relation between the countries has been conditioned by the nuclear program of North Korea, especially since 2002, when the George W Bush administration included North Korea in the so-called “Axis of Evil”. Although both countries – together with the US, Japan, China and Russia – started multilateral discussions of the possibility of a denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, the main tension between the countries have occurred regarding the nuclear tests and ballistic missile tests on the part of North Korea and the yearly US - South Korean joint military exercises.

Developments of 2015

Despite the fact that during the year both parties carried out measures to promote confidence and showed their willingness to improve bilateral relations, the month of August saw some of the moments of greatest tension of the last years, when the armed forces of both countries exchanged artillery fire and raised the level of alert almost to a pre-war scenario. Halfway through June, two North Korean soldiers crossed the border separating the countries and returned to their country after South Korean soldier fired warning shots, but what provoked the crisis between the two countries was the explosion, in early August, of three anti-personnel mines in the southern part of the border, in the demilitarised zone, in which two South Korean soldiers were wounded. A joint investigation by the South Korean government and by the UN determined that the mines had been planted by North Korean forces, accusations that North Korea denied. After the decision from Seoul to resume transmission of anti-government propaganda with loudspeakers on the border, the tension grew over the following days until August 20, when there was a firefight on the border, although there were no mortalities. North Korea announced an ultimatum for the end of the South Korean propaganda, and put their troops on pre-war alert, doubled the number of troops on the border, and deployed 50 submarines. For their part, South

Korea also said they were prepared for any kind of armed confrontation, and evacuated 10,000 residents from areas close to the border. Finally, on August 25, after some long conversations in the border area of Panmunjom, both countries come to an agreement to improve bilateral relations. South Korea stopped the loudspeaker propaganda campaign, and North Korea expressed regret for the incident of the anti-personnel mines. The UN and various governments, among them the US, have applauded the agreement, recognizing that the previous days that the stability of the Korean peninsula had been at risk. Despite the agreement, both countries wound up exchanging accusations over the next days, and in early September, South Korea and the US carried out military exercises and naval manoeuvres to confront potential North Korean attacks with biological weapons. Dialogue between the North and the South did not resume until the end of the year, when in November they signed an agreement for high-level talks, and then in December, held a reunion at the vice-ministerial level, the first since the escalation of tensions in August.

In addition to this incident, it is worth mentioning the increase in military tension on the disputed sea border between the two countries. In early May, North Korea fired threatening shots with live ammunition with no warning on South Korean vessels after South Korean patrol boats passed the maritime demarcation line claimed by North Korea, which is south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL), which is the de facto maritime border between North and South. In May, North Korea carried out military exercises with live rounds near the NLL, and South Korea accused Pyongyang of building military artillery installations near the same border region. Also in this area, in June and again in October, Seoul fired warning shots on North Korean vessels, considering them to have entered their territorial waters. For their part, in May, the South Korean forces carried out exercises with live ammunition in the Sea of Japan. On several moments of the year, Pyongyang criticized the joint military exercises of South Korea and the US, as well as predictions of increased military spending by South Korea published by the South Korean government in April. In that sense, in February several media outlets reported that Seoul had acquired antimissile defences, warplanes and other weapons worth more than \$7 billion US, the biggest arms purchase in the history of the country. At the end of the year, the New York Times reported that in 2014 South Korea had imported arms worth more than \$7.8 billion (most of that from the US) making them the world's largest arms importer for the year.

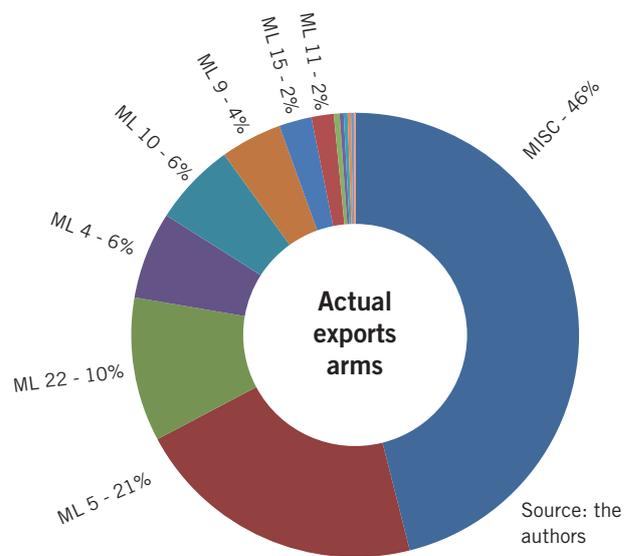
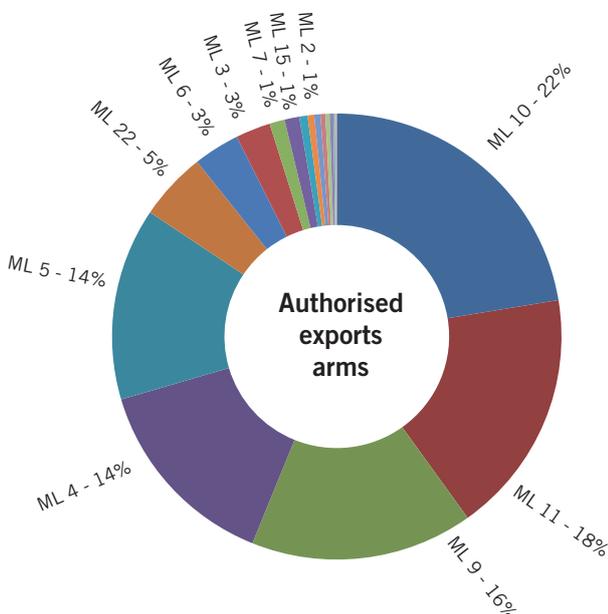
Regarding the tension associated with the North Korean nuclear programme, during the year China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, and the US reached a minimum consensus of the conditions for resumption of talks about the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, while the South Korean President, Park Geun-hye urged the international community to follow the example of the agreement with Iran and promised to actively participate in the economic reconstruction of North Korea if its government chose the path of dialogue and not of confrontation. Despite this, the international community became increasingly worried on several occasions due to the advances both in quantity and quality announced by Pyongyang in their nuclear weapons programme, as well as warnings that it would use it under certain circumstances. In May, for example, the North Korean government warned of important improvements in the precision of their missiles – not only those of short and medium range, but also of the intercontinental – and especially worrying to the international community, their capacity to miniaturise nuclear warheads for launching in intercontinental ballistic missiles. On this matter, a report of two specialists on North Korea estimated that the country had managed to manufacture between 13 and 16 nuclear bombs since 2003 and warned of the possibility that by 2020 Pyongyang would have between 20 and 100 nuclear weapons, a number significantly beyond previous estimates. The report also mentioned that for both the nuclear and the missile programme, a significant investment was budgeted for the next five years, and sustained that the North Korean government would have 1000 ballistic missiles, including some with long-range capability. In May, Pyongyang declared that they had successfully launched a ballistic missile from a submarine. Although various commentators doubted the veracity of the images with which the North Korean government presented as evidence of the test saying that they were far from being able to carry out an underwater launch, several governments condemned the action, considering it a clear violation of various UN resolutions, while the governments of the US, South Korea and Japan met and agreed to increase political and military pressure and implement already existing sanctions against North Korea to slow the expansion of their nuclear programme.

In September, the North Korean government declared that they were perfecting the ballistic technology necessary to put weather satellites into orbit, but various governments declared that the intention of Pyongyang was, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Worker's Party, on October 10, to carry out long-range

missile tests, which according to the US and South Korea would violate various UN resolutions. Although the predicted test did not occur, tensions were higher due to warning from the US that they would impose new sanctions on North Korea, and for their declarations in favour of the installation of an anti-missile system in South Korean territory or for the deployment of a destroyer warship equipped with Aegis combat technology in the Sea of Japan. In response, Pyongyang announced the reopening in full capacity, after several years of inactivity, of the main nuclear reactor of the country (en Yongbyon), one of the main sources of plutonium and enriched uranium, both necessary for developing nuclear weapons. In the last months of the year, the regional tension rose for the latest launch – a failure – of a ballistic missile from a submarine in November; for the publication of satellite images which suggested significant improvements in North Korea’s main satellite launch-site (in Sohae) and new activity in the underground nuclear tests of Punggye-ri – where three tests have been carried out to date.

Arms Exports

In 2015, South Korea was one of the main Asian importers of European arms. The exports of military material to the country indicated in the EU report grew to almost €180 million in categories such as Miscellaneous, targeting systems, technology, explosives, and warships. In authorised exports, there was a a substantial decline in licences, which declined from €11 billion in authorisations on 2014 to €2.4 billion, in categories of military aircraft, electronics, warships, explosives, and targeting systems. The main EU business partners which sold arms to South Korea in 2015 were France, Germany, the UK, Holland, and Sweden.



Source: the authors

CHINA

Overview of the situation:

The conflict goes back to the failed agreement between the Chinese and Tibetan leaders after the rise to power in 1949 of Mao Zedong. A decade of increasing military, cultural and demographic pressure by Beijing in the region led to several suppressed attempts at rebellion in which thousands died. In 1959, the Dalai Lama and tens of thousands of people fled to the north of India, where the government in exile has its headquarters, as well as other countries. Despite several rounds of negotiation between Beijing and the Tibetan government in exile in which the independence of Tibet has been formally abandoned (yielding to the so-called “Middle Way”, or a lack of genuine autonomy for regions historically inhabited by the Tibetan community), the conflict has remained heated and there are constant exchanges of accusation from both parties. The Dalai Lama has repeatedly condemned the repression, the demographic colonization, the assimilationist policies directed at the Tibetan population and the lack of human rights in Tibet, while the Chinese government accuses the Dalai Lama of promoting regional secession with periodic outbreaks of violence, such as that which occurred in 2008, the most violent of the last decades, when Beijing was designated as the host of the Olympic Games, or for the constant protests, such as the wave of self-immolations which began in 2009.

Developments of 2015

During 2015 there continued to be self-immolations by fire and other protests against the government, which intensified around specific dates such as the anniversary of the Tibetan uprising in 1959, the birthday of the Dalai Lama, or the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Autonomous Region of Tibet. At the end of the year, several Tibetan organisations pointed out that nearly 150 people had burned themselves to death since 2009, the majority killing themselves. As in previous years, there were also protests against activities which were damaging to the environment. By way of example, in May there were face-offs between

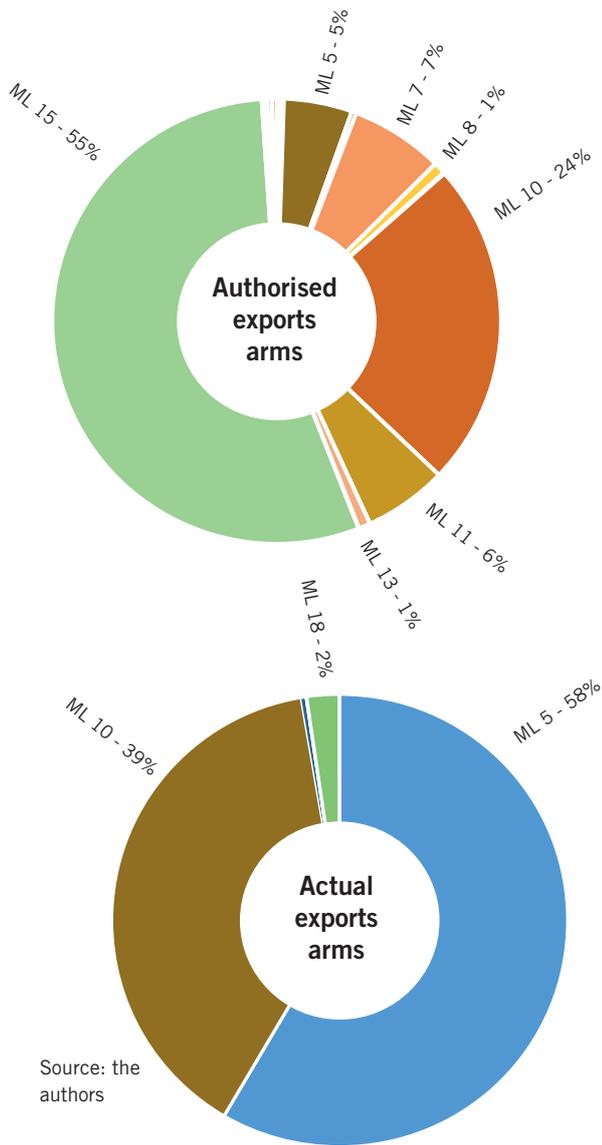
police and persons protesting the construction of a road to facilitate mining activity in the prefecture of Chamdo on a mountain sacred to the Tibetan community, although there is a lack of information about the size of the protests and the total number of people detained or wounded. As well, several people were arrested in May in the province of Qinghai for protesting the demolition of their homes, located near a scenic lake. At the beginning of September, hundreds of people gathered in the county of Nyagchuka, in the Sichuan province, to protest the death of a prominent monk who had been in prison since 2002. The monk, very active in the protection of the culture and environment of Tibet, had been sentenced to death for the alleged participation in an incident with explosive devices, although later the sentence was commuted to a life sentence. During the protests, there were incidents between protesters and police. Also, in September there were a number of incidents and arrests during protests against the government in Ngaba, a region in which has seen some of the biggest protests in recent years. It should also be mentioned that there were protests in India and Nepal for the 50th anniversary of the 1959 uprising against the presence of the Chinese government in Tibet. In Nepal, due to growing pressure from the Nepalese government against the movement for a free Tibet, the protests were smaller.

As well, during the year there were a number of cases of human rights violations. In March, a coalition of 175 Tibetan organisations urged the Olympic committee not to designate Beijing as the site of the Winter Olympics in 2022, as the situation since the celebration of the Olympic Games in 2008 had only worsened in terms of repression and human rights violations. Later, with the announcement of a visit to the US of the Chinese President Xi Jinping, an alliance of NGOs sent a letter to president Barack Obama to condemn worsening human right abuses and to make public that in only a month in July and August, more than 250 lawyers active in defending human rights had been arrested, although the majority were later released. In September, during the 30th regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the US government and other European countries condemned human rights abuses in China, particularly in Tibet and Xinjiang. On this matter, it is worth mentioning that during the year, relations at times were tense between China and the US for praise for the Dalai Lama from Obama during one visit to the US, as well as the visit of a delegation of the Congress in November to Tibet, during which they upheld the importance of human rights and freedom of speech and religion. One of the most criticised policies of the Communist Party

in Tibet during the year was the announcement that Buddhist temples needed to fly Chinese flags, as well as the intention of the government to undertake a program of re-education and patriotic evaluation of Buddhist monks and nuns. Although at several moments during the year the possibility of a renewal of the dialogue between Beijing and the Tibetan government in exile was reconsidered, on various occasions Beijing criticised the so-called Middle Way proposed by the Dalai Lama, considering it to contradict the Constitution and the Law on National and Regional Autonomy. In addition to demanding the explicit renouncement of the Middle Way, Beijing also criticised the declarations of the Dalai Lama that he did not want a successor and that the Buddhist tradition of reincarnation should come to an end. Beijing also declared that the Executive branch should be the one to approve and ratify the reincarnation of the current Dalai Lama, who turned 80 in 2015. Some analysts had warned that the government wanted to control the reincarnation process to push a political agenda. Finally, in October of the first round of elections were held to choose the prime minister and the representatives of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, in which only those 150,000 Tibetans residing outside of China were able to cast their votes. This is the second time that elections had been held since 2011, when the Dalai Lama abandoned his position as the head of the government in order to focus on spiritual matters. According to the results, which were made known in early December, more than 45,000 people participated in the first round of the election, and the current prime minister, Lobsang Sangay, received more than 66% of the votes in the first round.

Arms Exports

Of those countries in a situation of tension or conflict, China is one of the main buyers of EU arms. From Europe to China there is an active arms trade, which in 2015 rose to €114 million. 58% of the arms acquired were firing control systems, such as target acquisition systems, and weapons guidance systems. Another 39% of the imported arms belonged to the military categories including warplanes and unmanned aerial vehicles. In terms of authorised exports, these were more than €1.3 billion for the year in question. The most requested military categories were image forming systems, and warplanes. It is also notable that China intends to continue importing firing control systems, all-terrain vehicles, and biological and chemical agents, as they have done in previous years. France, Holland, and the Czech republic are the principal exporters of arms to China.



INDIA

Overview of the situation:

India is the setting of several hotspots of socio-political tension, especially the states in the northeast of the country, conflicts over the division of the territory in the post-colonial period after India was established as an independent state in 1947. In the state of Manipur, the tension that is frequently seen between various armed groups and Indian security forces has its origins in the demands for independence, as well as existing tensions between ethnic groups that coexist in the state. In the '60s and '70s, several armed groups emerged, some inspired by Communism and others by ethnic affiliation, which remained active throughout the following decades. On the other hand, in the regional context, the development of the conflict in Manipur also generated constant inter-ethnic tension between Meiteis and Nagas in the neighbouring states of Nagaland and Assam, as well as across the border in Myanmar. The economic hardship of the state and its isolation from the rest of India have contributed to bring the grievances of the peoples of Manipur to a head. In Nagaland, the conflict has its origin in the decolonisation, when a Naga movement demanded the recognition of collective rights for the mostly

demanded the recognition of collective rights for the mostly Christian population inside a country with a majority Hindu population. The creation of the Naga NCC in 1946 marked the beginning of the political demands for independence of both in terms of independence for the Naga population and over the next decades, evolved both in terms of ideology (independence for Nagaland, or the creation of the Greater Nagaland, incorporating territories from neighbouring states inhabited by Nagas) as well as in terms of methodology of opposition, initiating armed struggle in 1955. In 1980 an armed insurgent group, the NSCN, which later split into two factions, led by Isaac-Muivah (NSCN-IM) and Khaplang (NSCN-K), respectively. Since 1997 the NSCN-IM have agreed to a cease-fire and negotiations with the Indian government, and an agreement was reached an agreement for a cease-fire with the NSCN-K in 2000.

Developments of 2015

Tensions were high in 2015 in the Indian state of Manipur, where clashes continued between security forces and the different armed groups which operate in the northeastern state. According to the statistics of the South Asia Terrorism Portal, 96 persons died as a result of the violence and skirmishes between security forces and insurgent groups, compared to 54 deaths in 2014 or 55 in 2013. At the same time, it's worth noting that the Indian government continues to apply the AFSPA anti-terrorist legislation, which has in the last years granted vast powers to the security forces. Human rights organisations have repeatedly condemned this legislation, which has granted impunity to security forces committing human rights violations.

During the entire year occasional conflicts were reported, which not only took the lives of insurgents and armed forces, but also civilians. In June, the most serious incidents of the year occurred when three armed groups active in the northeast of India, grouped under the name "Army of Naga" - NSCN-K (which normally operates in the state of Nagaland), KYKL and KCP (both of which operate in Manipur) – vindicated the combined attack which killed 18 members of the armed forces. Members of the KYKL were believed to have masterminded the attack. The attack resulted in an operation of armed forces which caused the deaths of between 50 and 70 insurgents, and resulted in several insurgent camps in Myanmar being dismantled. The operation was carried out using helicopters and drones from the Indian armed forces. This led to disagreement between the two countries, as the government of Myanmar denied that Indian security forces had acted inside their borders, and the Indian government insisted that Indian armed forces had acted inside of the neighbouring country, although in constant communication with the armed forces of Myanmar. Alongside these armed clashes, there were also a number

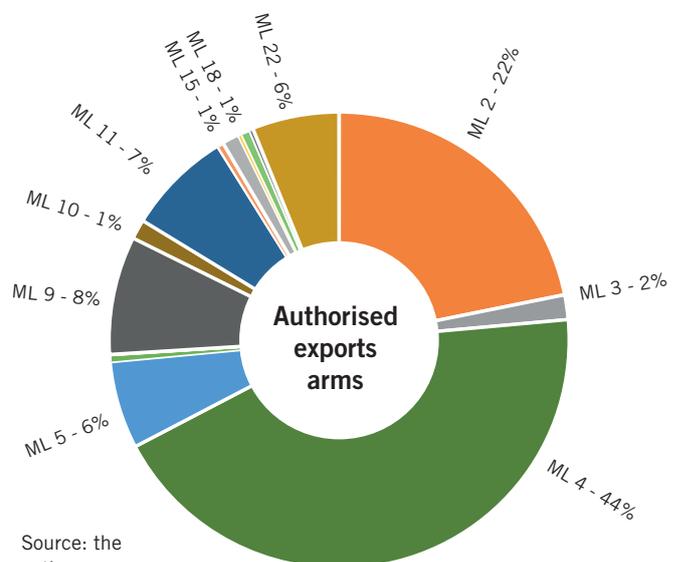
of social protests with large demonstrations that led to riots in which 9 people were killed and 300 injured. Kuki people's organisations moved against the approval of various laws which would lead to the dispossession of lands and would erode the protections on lands given to specific tribal groups. As well, there were protests against the Inner Line Limit system, which restricted access to Indian citizens to protected zones, preserving the ancestral rights of certain peoples

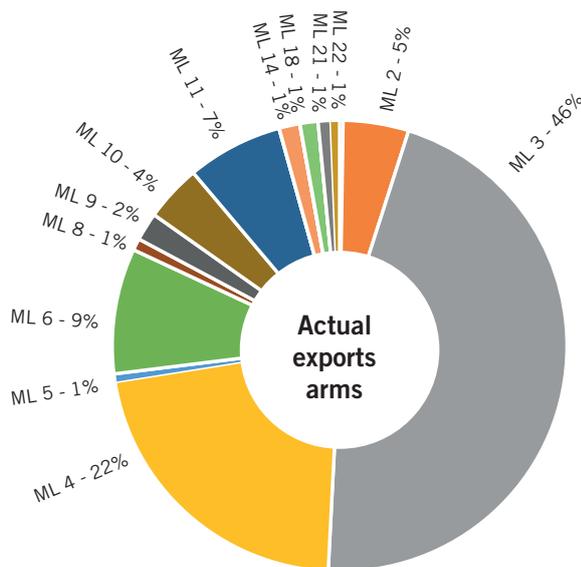
Regarding the situation in Nagaland in 2015, despite the achievement of a peace agreement between the Indian government and the opposition armed group NSCN-IM, the tense situation continued, mainly due to the breaking of the cease-fire agreement between another of the main armed opposition groups, the NSCN-K. This led to an outbreak of violence in the state, with an increase in deaths from the prior year. According to data from the South Asia Terrorism Portal, clashes between insurgent groups and Indian armed forces led to 46 deaths, compared to only 15 deaths in 2014. The violation of the cease-fire, which had been in effect since 2001, occurred after the insurgency announced in March that they would not renew the agreement. The armed group indicated that the main reason was the government's refusal to negotiate questions of Naga sovereignty. Following the announcement, the government also said they would not renew the agreement in April, when it was due for extension. In the last years, skirmishes in Nagaland between insurgents and Indian security forces had dwindled to almost nothing, but after the breakdown of the agreement, there were several new clashes. Notably, the recently established platform of armed groups NSCN-K, ULFA-I NDFB-S, and KLO took responsibility for one of these attacks, although it was likely masterminded by the NSCN-K. This was followed by an operation by the Armed Forces which killed eight rebel fighters. There were reports of clashes and attacks in coordination with the NSCN-K, including those in other states such as Manipur. As well, several rebels died in operations of the armed forces, in which members of other armed groups such as the NSCN-KK also died. In March the armed group announced that it would not prolong the cease-fire agreement with the government which had been reached in 2001. In April, when the agreement was officially up for renewal, the executive branch announced that they wouldn't continue to respect the cease-fire. The explication for breaking the pact was that the government had refused to negotiate over the question of autonomy. The situation got more complicated, as the breakdown of the ceasefire agreement also resulted in the expulsion of two of the leaders of the NSCN-R faction who had

been against ending the pact. The leaders, who had created the new faction NSCN-R, had tried to block the breakdown by calling for a reunion of the joint supervision mechanism, which had been broken up by Khaplang, the leader of the NSCN-K and a promoter of a suspension of the agreement. Several outbreaks of violence occurred as a result of the pact being broken, a decision that was criticised by various Naga organisations due to the negative impact it would have on possible negotiations leading to an end to the conflict. For their part, the government asked for the extradition of S.S. Khaplang and other members of the upper echelons of the group.

Arms Exports

India stands out as the first country in the region of South Asia in terms of European arms imports. In 2015 alone, India purchased arms for more than €1.23 billion, more than twice what it had purchased in 2014 (which was more than €525 million.) Among the exported military materials are categories referred too as ammunition, which accounts for some 46%, followed by explosive devices such as bombs and missiles. They also finalised the purchase of tanks and armoured vehicles, as well as electronic systems, small arms and artillery. In terms of authorisations, their value doubled in 2015, growing to nearly €15.2 billion, up from €7.5 billion in 2014. The most sought-out categories were explosive devices, light arms and artillery, war ships, electronics, targeting systems, ammunition, and warplanes. The main European exporting nations were: France, the UK, Germany, Bulgaria, and Italy.





INDIA – PAKISTAN

Overview of the situation:

The situation of tension between India and Pakistan has its roots in the partition of British India into the two states, as well as the dispute over the Kashmir region. This tension has led to four armed conflicts (1947-8, 1965, 1971, 1999) as a result of the claims on the part of both states for sovereignty over the Kashmir region, territorially divided between India, Pakistan, and China. The armed conflict in 1947 gave rise to the current division and the de facto border between the two countries. Since 1989, the armed conflict has crossed into the interior of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1999, a year after both countries had carried out nuclear tests, the tension led to an armed conflict, which was paralysed by US mediation. In 2004, a peace process began, without substantial advances in the resolution of the dispute over Kashmir, although there was significant reconciliation in economic terms. However, India continues to accuse Pakistan of aiding insurgents operating in Jammu and Kashmir, and armed violence continues to break out between the two armies on the de facto border which divides the countries. In 2008 there were deadly bombings in Mumbai which led to a disruption of the peace process due to Indian accusations that they had been organised on Pakistani soil. Since then relations between the two countries have been remained at a standstill, despite occasional diplomatic contact.

Developments of 2015

India and Pakistan were in a situation of tension throughout the year of 2015, with constant violations of the cease-fire agreement (signed in 2003) by both armed forces of both countries, causing the deaths of 174 people, 20 of whom were civilians. The tension between the two nuclear powers has been increased by the enormous militarisation of the main region in dispute by the two countries. This situation led to the cancellation of several diplomatic meetings which had been planned to solve the problem. The meeting in March between Abdul Basit, the High Commissioner of Pakistan in Delhi, and Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the separatist

leader of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat (Movement for Freedom) resulted in a criss-cross of declarations relative to the situation of Kashmir by political and military leaders, and led to an estrangement between the two countries, and prolonged the diplomatic and military tension throughout the year. The military operations carried out by the Indian armed forces in Myanmar, in persecution of rebel groups in Manipur, led the government of Pakistan to threaten that a similar operation by Indian armed forces in Pakistani territory would be met with retaliation. Among the deadly military clashes between the Armed Forces that occurred repeatedly over the length of the year in the border area, it is worth mentioning those that occurred in the first days of January. At least twelve people died, one of them a child, ten were wounded and thousands were forced to flee as a consequence of the exchange of gunfire, repeated over several days. Both countries accused the other of violating the cease-fire. The violence began after India accused Pakistan of destroying one of its warships. In August, there were also serious clashes between soldiers on the border which lasted for at least ten days, causing the deaths of six civilians in Indian-held Kashmir and two in Pakistan-held Kashmir. Also, 20 people were wounded as a consequence of the armed confrontations, which consisted mainly of artillery and mortar fire. Again, accusations were made by both sides as to who started the attacks. The Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon expressed his worries about the the escalation of violence on the border and made a call for the two parts to exercise as much restraint as possible. Alongside the violence and the calls for dialogue there was also a suspension of a previous meeting between both countries to deal with matters related to security.

During the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, the estrangement between the two countries was evident, both in terms of accusations exchanged of promotion of terrorism in their respective territories and the omission of a meeting between delegates of the two nations. The US intervened on several occasions, worried about the deterioration of the situation at a moment of escalating violence in Afghanistan, as Pakistan would play a decisive role in the negotiations of the Afghani government with the Taliban. The year ended with weak agreements between both countries, which however didn't lead to any kind of concrete compromise for demilitarisation or an end to the violence. In the Paris summit against climate change, Nawaz Sharif and Narendra Modi had a surprise meeting, and sat together and exchanged some words. In December, in Bangkok, the national defence advisers finally met. Sushma Swaraj, the Indian minister of Defence came to the Heart of Asia

conference (Istanbul Process), held in Islamabad, where both states agreed to resume a new process of dialogue. The final agreement was sealed when Modi phoned Sharif on his birthday (December 25) and made a surprise stopover in Lahore, the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Pakistan since 2004.

Arms Exports

See the reports for India and Pakistan.

INDONESIA

Overview of the situation:

Although Indonesia gained independence from Holland in 1949, West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) was administered for several years by the United Nations and did not formally become part of Indonesia until 1969, the result of a referendum that many consider to have been fraudulent. Since then, a deep-rooted secessionist movement has existed in the region and an armed opposition group (OPM) has been involved in a low-intensity armed struggle. In addition to constant demands for self-determination, there are other sources of conflict in the region, such as community clashes between several indigenous groups, tension between the local population (Papuan and mostly animist or Christian) and so-called transmigrants (mostly Muslim Javanese), protests against the Freeport transnational extractive corporation, one of the largest in the world, or accusations of human rights violations and unjust enrichment levelled at the armed forces. On the other hand, after almost 30 years of armed conflict, the Armed Forces and the armed independentist group GAM signed a peace agreement in August 2005, only months after a tsunami completely devastated the province and caused the arrival of hundreds of NGOs. Despite the progress made towards the peace process and reconstruction, in the years since the signing of the peace accords there is conflict around the reintegration of combatants, demands for creation of new provinces, repression of religious minorities and groups of women, and calls for an end to corruption and incompetence by public authorities.

Developments of 2015

No major clashes were reported between the Indonesian Armed Forces and the OPM, although demonstrations calling for self-determination and other acts of protest continued to be staged against the terrible human rights situation in the region and the actions of the state security forces and militias deployed in Papua. In addition to one-off attacks by the OPM, some sporadic acts of violence were reported: around 100 people were arrested and dozens of houses were burned down by the Indonesian Army in the town of Utikini (near Timika) in January, according to the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP); two civil servants and a private security guard of the Freeport mining company, one of the largest in the world, were killed in January; in February, incidents were reported during protests against

the events of December 2014, when according to Human Rights Watch five people were killed and 17 were wounded after the police opened fire on 800 demonstrators; three police officers were murdered in the region of Puncak in December; demonstrations to celebrate Independence Day for Papua (1 December) led to reports of killings and other forms of abuse perpetrated by the state security forces; and a small mosque and several houses in the Tolkiara region were burned down in late July, coinciding with the celebration of the Muslim festival Eid al-Fitr. Regarding the last incident, provincial and local government officials urged calm, opened an investigation into the events (with some media outlets indicating that those responsible for the attack were members of a Christian church called Gereja Injili di Indonesia) and warned of the danger involved in these incidents between different religions, citing the situation in the Moluccas and Sulawesi in the late 1990s as examples.

Despite these dynamics of violence, President Joko Widodo travelled to Papua several times during the year and announced various conciliatory measures for the region. In May, Joko Widodo declared his intention to embark upon a new phase in the relations between the Indonesian government and West Papua, to pay special attention to the region and to improve the human rights situation and the welfare of the population. Shortly before the beginning of this visit, the fourth in one year, the government announced the release of five political prisoners (in his 10-year rule, the previous president only released one) and the lifting of restrictions on access for journalists. Days before, simultaneous demonstrations broke out in 10 countries and 22 cities and around 47,000 signatures were collected to demand free access for journalists in Papua. Later, in June, the government announced its intention to release scores of political prisoners, launch infrastructure projects and tackle the problem of unemployment in Papua. In addition, some media outlets reported the president's intention to put an end to transmigration policies to Papua, arguing that they cause serious problems in the region (since the annexation of Papua by Indonesia in 1969, hundreds of thousands of people have arrived to the area under these programmes). However, a few days later, the transmigration minister said that these programmes had been successful and would therefore be expanded in the future. Finally, it is worth noting that in mid-July, due to an accident involving a military aircraft, an article of the Jakarta Post pointed out the high number of accidents of this type, 18 between 2006 and 2015) highlighted the need to partially renew equipment of the Armed Forces. Referring to defence reports

and date from the Centre for investigation for Strategic and International Studies, the Jakarta Post indicated that 52% of the operating military equipment was more than 30 years old. In the case of the Air Force, only 38% of the arsenal was more than 30 years old, but in the case of the Navy and the Army, the figures went up to 59% and 54%, respectively. The Newspaper also mentioned the declarations of president Joko Widodo about the commitment to raise military spending to 1.5% of the GDP, and pointed out that in order to avoid that the rise in defence spending be interpreted as destabilizing the region, planned to underscore the difference between offensive and defensive military equipment.

Arms Exports

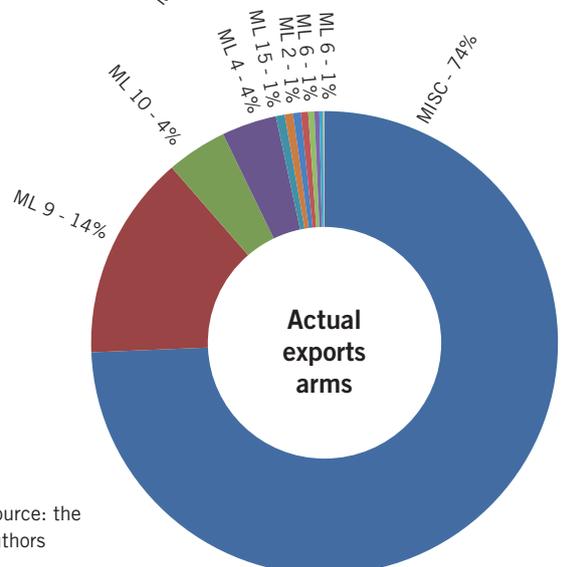
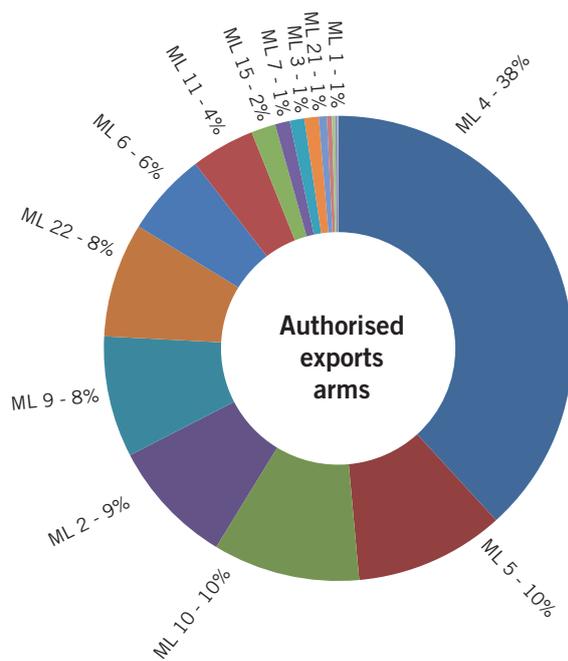
Indonesia imported €315 million of EU military equipment in 2015. 75% of the weaponry was

unidentified, or in the category of Miscellaneous, which along with the categories of warships and warplanes were the arms most exported to the country. In terms to authorised exports, licenses for more than €2.78 billion in arms were approved, of which there was more than €1 billion in explosive devices such as bombs, torpedoes, rockets, and missiles. The main EU partners were France, Italy, Spain and Holland.

JAPAN

Overview of the situation:

The dispute between China and Japan (and to a lesser extent, Taiwan) over the sovereignty and administration of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (as they are known in Japanese and Chinese, respectively) in the East China Sea dates back to the early 1970s, when the USA, which had administered the islands since 1945, ceded control of them to Japan. Although the high strategic value of the islands and the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the vicinity had already brought Japan and China into conflict, the conflict escalated in 2012 with the decision of the Japanese government to buy from a private owner five islands in dispute, and in 2013, China's unilateral declaration of a new Air Defence Identification Zone that included the disputed islands. Both sides' decisions significantly raised the political and military tension between China and Japan, with a growing influence on the airspace and the territorial waters of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands by ships and aircraft of both countries. As well, the contentiousness between both countries must be understood within a context of the troubled historical relationship between China and Japan since the early 20th century due to the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and the Second World War. According to some analysts, the trade agreements between Japan and the US and the expansionist policies of China and Japan in the region have the potential to destabilize the entire East China Sea region.



Source: the authors

Developments of 2015

The tension between both countries was affected by the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the new military strategy being carried out by the government of Shinzo Abe. The approval in the month of September on the part of the Japanese Parliament of two laws which allow, for the first time since the second world war, the Japanese Armed Forces to participate in tasks of collective self-defence outside Japanese borders caused criticisms on the part of China and several internal protests. The government declared that neither these laws nor the reinterpretation of the Constitution proposed by the Administration would heighten the conflict with China, but the relationship between both countries had already deteriorated notably in the months prior, due to the visits of some Japanese ministers (and Abe's wife) to the Yasukuni temple, where Abe also made an offering. The Yasukuni temple holds the remains of some of the main figures responsible for war crimes committed by Japan during the Second World War,

described as martyrs by some senior officials in the Japanese government. Also controversial was Abe's speech during the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, in which he expressed profound regret for the damage caused, but did apologise or ask for forgiveness for the crimes committed during the period as China had demanded. China had already heavily criticized the new guidelines for cooperation in military material announced by Japan and the US in April, which anticipate a greater implication by Japan in global matters and an explicit cooperation with the US facing certain threats, the collective declaration between Japan, the US and Australia which condemned the aggressive policies of Beijing in the South China Sea in terms of new constructions and territorial claims, as well as the warming of relations between countries with which China has territorial disputes in the South China Sea, such as the Philippines or Vietnam.

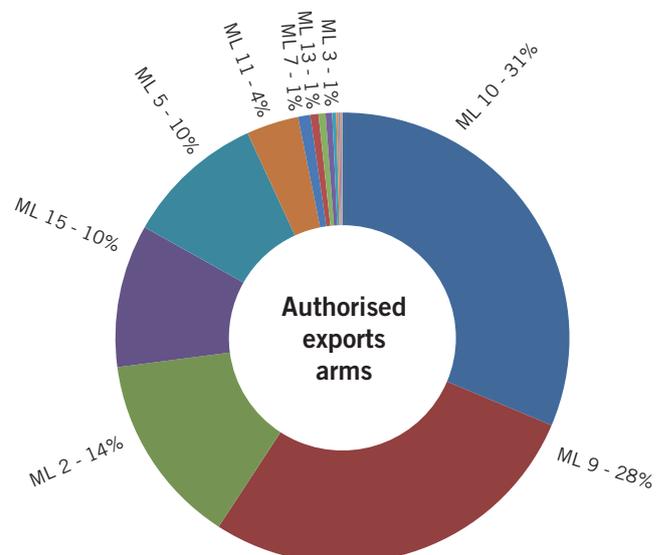
As part of the new security strategy, the Japanese government confirmed in December its intention to deploy anti-aircraft and anti-ship batteries in the chain of more than 200 islands in the East China Sea that stretch from Japan to Taiwan, as well as a 20% increase in military presence over the next five years, to almost 10,000 troops. According to some analysts, these plans by the Japanese government are a response to pressure from the US government to counteract the growing influence of China in the region and to assert greater control over its access to the eastern Pacific Ocean. In addition to control over access to the eastern Pacific and the definition of areas of interest between the United States, Japan and China in the region, the installation of military batteries and the deployment of additional troops in the archipelago is also a response to the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, especially the increase in exploration and exploitation of gas and oil reserves by China in the East China Sea. As such, in July Tokyo declared that the installation of offshore crude platforms in the region posed a threat to Japanese interests – partly because China could install military radar on those platforms or use them as a base for helicopters or drones – and a violation of the 2008 agreement for joint exploration of the hydrocarbon reserves of the region. Meanwhile, China said that it was fully within its rights to prospect for oil inside its territorial waters, whereas Tokyo countered that Japan and China had not demarcated the marine borders in the zone, so that what currently exists is merely a line halfway between the two countries which serves as nothing more than a de facto border.

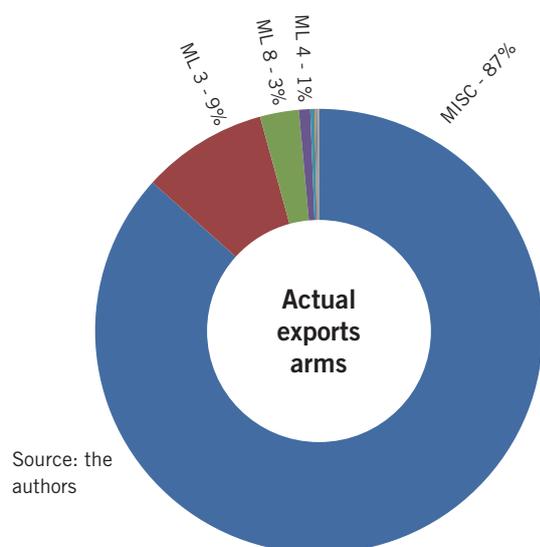
Regarding the controversy around the islands of Senkaku/Diaoyu, although the Japanese

government condemned that during 2015 Chinese Coast Guard boats had entered into Japanese waters some 40 times, and that both countries carried out exercises and manoeuvres near the disputed area, the tension dropped considerably compared to former years and there were even several attempts to generate trust and improve bilateral relations and to insist on peaceful dealings and dialogue around the conflict. It is worth noting the face-to-face meetings between the maximum leaders of the two countries, Shinzo Abe and Xi Jinping, at the end of April and in early May to improve bilateral relations, as well as the meeting in January between the Defence Ministers, in which they created measures to respond to aerial and maritime crises; an official meeting – the first since 2013 – between the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Chinese Ambassador to Japan; the 13th meeting of the Dialogue on Security between China and Japan in March in Tokyo – the first in the last 4 years – to improve and strengthen bilateral relations; or the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of China, Japan and Korea in Seoul for the first time since 2012 in which they committed to have a trilateral summit.

Arms Exports

The expanding militarism in Japan has led to an exponential increase in licenses for arms exports to the island nation, which has gone from €393.8 million in 2014, to €1.9 billion in 2015. Actual exports, however, have stayed constant in the last years, around €52 million. The main category of arms exported in the period under consideration have been that of Miscellaneous, followed by ammunition and explosives, and in the case of approvals, of military vessels and warships, military aircraft, small arms and artillery. The leading EU countries which exported arms to Japan in 2015 were France, Italy, Sweden and Austria.





PAKISTAN

Overview of the situation:

Pakistan is going through a serious crisis of armed conflict and political and social tension. After the coup d'état committed in 1999, General Pervez Musharraf's military regime ruled until Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif came to power. Pakistan is going through a grave crisis. The coup d'état left Pakistan isolated from the international community, which ended with the September attacks in 2001, when Musharraf became the principal ally for the US persecution of al-Qaeda in the region. Elements which can explain the uneasy situation in the country include the perpetuation of Musharraf's power, the ostentation of the Head of State and the Armed Forces, attacks on the judicial powers, the unpopular alliance with the US in a moment of growing anti-Americanism, the economic and environmental crisis, and the increasing presence of terrorist groups in other parts of the country (outside tribal areas) with an associated reduction in security. In 2008, Musharraf stepped down as president after the legislative elections, with the majority of the Parliament opposing him. Asif Ali Zardari from the PPP was elected to replace Musharraf. Despite the return of democracy to the country, and historical breakthroughs, such as the first peaceful transition from an incumbent government (PPP) ending their 5-year term in office to an incoming party (PML – Nawaz), Pakistan continues to pass through serious political instability, worsened by the impact of armed violence, sectarian violence, corruption, and the militarization of the country.

Developments of 2015

Pakistan went through a serious situation of tension during 2015, closely related to the armed conflict affecting various regions of the country. As for the armed conflict pitting Taliban insurgents against Pakistani security forces in various regions of the country, especially the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the conflict in the Balochistan province, several hotspots of violence and political crisis grew worse in response to the innumerable human rights violations under the cover of the fight against terrorism. After the Taliban

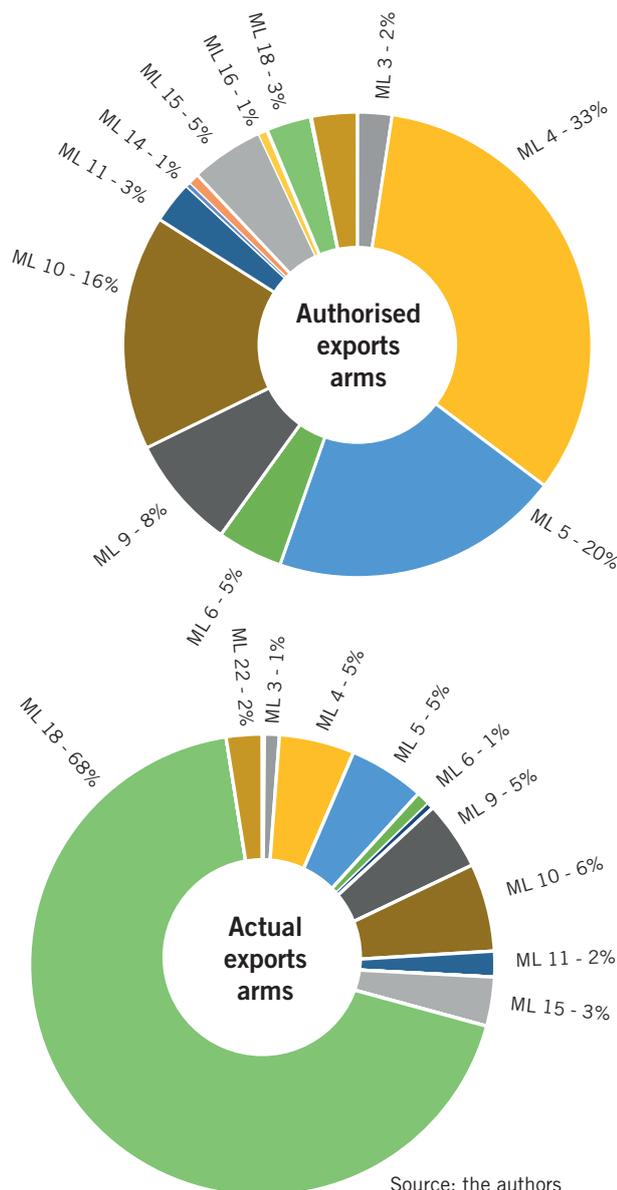
attack in Peshawar in August 2014, which caused the deaths of 145 persons, of which 132 were children, the government hurried to strengthen the anti-terrorist measures and to approve a National Action Plan (NAP) to confront insurgent groups in the country. The implementation of the NAP led to the strengthening of the leadership of the Armed Forces of the country to the detriment of civil leadership, and a prioritisation of military strategies above civil solutions to insurgent violence. One of the first measures adopted was the removal of the moratorium on the death penalty and the execution of around 300 people, which was condemned by Human Rights Watch. Not all of the death sentences were assigned to persons accused of terrorism. As well, a proposed constitutional amendment to allow the creation of military tribunals to judge civilians suspected of terrorism was condemned by human rights organisations, but was ratified by the Supreme Court. Halfway through the year, a report revealed that the NAP was not effectively meeting its goals. The secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, Shahid Khan, admitted to the Parliament that the National Counter Terrorism Authority was dysfunctional and didn't have the necessary funding to be effective. Many factors made the law ineffective: the assassination of political opponents, attacks on the army and police forces, the financing of insurgent groups, the selective murder of minorities, the failure of the reform of the madrassahs and failure of the prohibition of hate speech, or an effective judicial struggle against terrorists. The only result was that there were high numbers of convicts being executed since the introduction of speedy trials for prisoners condemned of terrorism. As well, the number of complaints of executions of normal prisoners were rising, some of them being minors. In this setting of tension and violence, there were many human rights violations, in which it is worth noting attacks on media professionals. In November, the Taliban insurgency killed Zaman Mehsud, a journalist working in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, where the violent situation seriously constrains the presence of journalists.

The situation of tension in the city of Karachi, which has been seriously affected by political and criminal violence, although it produced a significant decrease in mortality associated with violence. During 2015, 1040 people died in Karachi as a result of violence, which represents a 48% decrease from the previous year, according to figures compiled by the Centre for Research and Security Studies de Pakistan. Between 2013 and 2015, the centre registered 5,063 deaths as a result of violence in the city. The city was the setting for numerous incidents of sectarian violence and selective murders. In the last years,

armed militias of the main political parties – MQM, PPP and ANP – have been in large part responsible for the violence occurring in the city, as part of the struggle for power, and a high number of the victims of the violence were members of these political parties. In 2015, MQM condemned the political bias of security operations in the city, given the arrest of several of its members, searches in the homes of party leaders and a raid on the central headquarters. MQM also accused the Rangers of the summary execution of one of its members after which they called for a general strike.

Arms Exports

Due to the insecurity in the country, Pakistan is one of the most controversial destinations for EU arms shipments. Despite the fact that the country has been immersed in tension since 2004 and that the general security situation has worsened, including having one of the highest rates of forced displacement,



Pakistan received more than €142 million in EU arms exports in 2015. Of this amount, there were large amounts of military production systems, military aircraft, targeting systems, explosives, and warships. In terms of future arms exports, Pakistan received €1.9 billion in authorisations. According to the available data in EU reports, the leading arms exporting nations to Pakistan are France, Italy, Spain, and the Czech Republic.

THAILAND

Overview of the situation:

Since Thaksin Shinawatra came to power in 2001, he brought about not only a resurgence of armed conflict in the southern provinces with a Muslim majority, but also a political and social polarisation between sectors praising the attempts of the Prime Minister to undermine the traditional party system and those who condemned his authoritarian style of leadership, his drug war (which killed more than 2,000) or his militaristic approach to the conflict in the South. The socio-political crisis escalated in 2006, when allegations of corruption led to three massive protests calling for Thaksin Shinawatra's resignation, and the armed forces committed a coup d'état which forced Shinawatra to flee into exile. Since then, there have been intense protests on the part of the People's Alliance for Democracy (the movement also known as the "yellow shirt" movement) and the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (also known as the "red shirt" movement, which supports Thaksin Shinawatra). In May 2014, another military coup was organized by the Armed Forces against the Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra – Thaksin's sister – which led to the installation of a military junta which called itself the National Council for Peace and Order. Although the levels of protest and social movements were drastically reduced under military rule, both political parties and numerous other governments have criticised the authoritarian character of the junta and their attempts to perpetuate their power. What is more, since 2008 the historical conflict heated up between Thailand and Cambodia over the sovereignty of Preah Vihear and the surrounding territory, a Hindu temple from the 11th century that is located on the border between the two countries. After the failure of the International Court of Justice 1962 decision which turned the temple over to Cambodia, the dispute was latent, and was kept from rearing its head through a series of agreements between the two countries. However, the declaration of the temple as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2008 revived the tensions and provoked various armed clashes between the Armed Forces of both countries, especially between 2008 and 2011.

Developments of 2015

As in the previous year, when the Armed Forces inflicted a military coup, there were few major acts of violence or protests or social movements, although NGOs, foreign governments, and even international organisations such as the United Nations continued to criticise the regime for the unsettling human rights situation, and for suspected attempts of the military junta – also known as the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) – to perpetuate their power, and for Executive branch policies of control

and repression of the opposition. In addition to these criticisms, the event that generated the greatest media attention was the explosion of an explosive device in a Hindu sanctuary, the Erawan shrine, in Bangkok, a tourist attraction, killing 20 people – two thirds of them foreigners – and injuring over 120. The Thai government and various media outlets considered it to be the worst attack in the history of the country. The next day, another explosive device exploded in a public ferry pier in Bangkok, though without any mortalities. No individual or organisation claimed responsibility for the attacks, which led to contradictory and confusing theories and information about the circumstances of the explosion. In the days after the attacks, the police and army launched a large-scale operation, arresting 139 people and searching more than 4,600 homes. In late September, the Police closed the investigation, announcing that two of the people arrested had confessed to having carried out the attack as a response to the state offensive against human trafficking organisations. However, the government did not dismiss the connection between the attacks and the political crisis plaguing the country for years, and which was the excuse for the military coup in 2014.

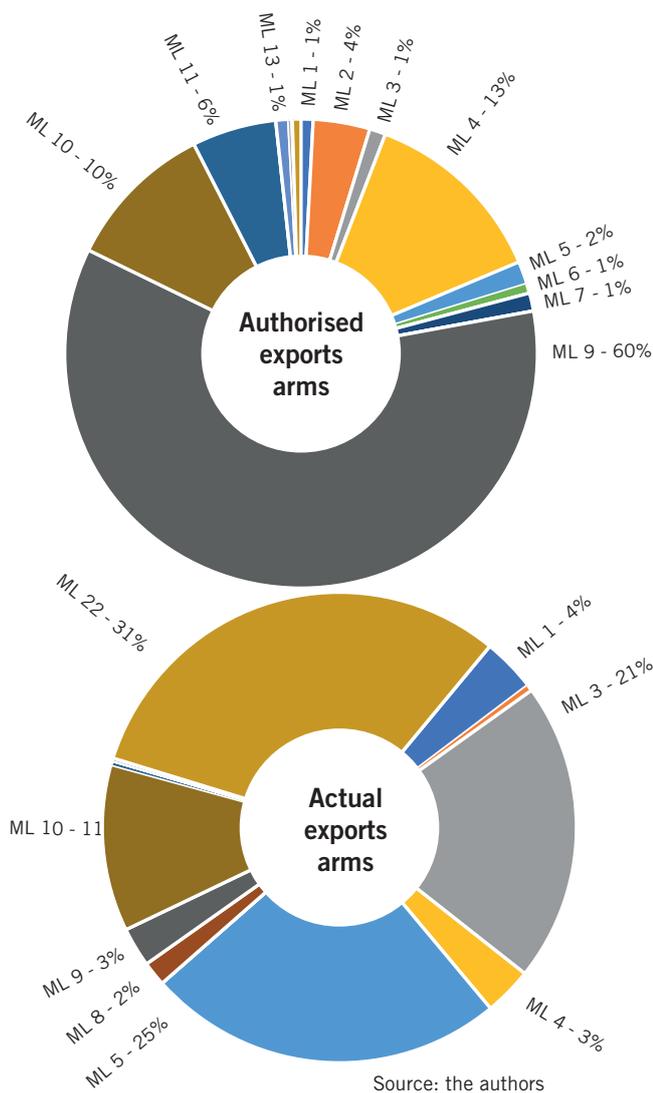
During the year there was much criticism (from NGOs, foreign governments and even international bodies) of the precarious human rights situation, the military junta's alleged attempts to remain in power and the Executive Branch's policies to repress and control the opposition. One of the factors that set off major protests was the National Legislative Assembly's approval of an impeachment process in January against former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, which carries a five-year disqualification from running for office, as well as the subsequent trial in which she is accused of negligence in connection with government subsidies for the rice-farming sector, to which she has pleaded not guilty. If convicted, she could face up to 10 years in prison. A few days after the Attorney General files charges against the former Prime Minister, the National Anti-Corruption Commission prosecuted 250 former MPs for their role in passing a Constitutional Amendment in 2007, which could bar them from holding office for five years. In the last decade, around 150 members of political parties close to the Shinawatra family have been forbidden to hold office, including four people who have served as heads of government. In April, the junta's Prime Minister, General Prayuth Chan-ocha announced the withdrawal of martial law and the entry into force of Article 44 of the interim constitution, which among other powers, gives authority to the PM to decide to take action without authorisation from the legislative branch when deemed necessary for national security. The United

Nations declared that Article 44 could be even more authoritarian than martial law, and others, such as Human Rights Watch, urged neighbouring nations to apply concerted pressure on the current military regime to stop what it sees as a drift towards a dictatorial regime. As well, in July, several Russian news outlets published the intention of the governments of Thailand and Russia to exchange rubber (80,000 tons) and fruit for around 160 million dollars in weaponry. Previously, in April, during a visit to Thailand on the part of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev (the first to visit Thailand in 25 years) both governments committed to increase their commercial transactions from 5 billion dollars in 2015 to 10 billion dollars in 2016.

In regards to the tension between Thailand and Cambodia, over the Preah Vihear shrine, during the year there were no major confrontations between the armed forces of the two countries, and in fact, there were several attempts to encourage trust between the two nations, but tensions rose over two contentious issues in previous months: illegal logging and contraband. In the early part of the year, three Cambodians which were illegally cutting rare tropical hardwoods on Thai soil were shot by the Thai Armed Forces. Voices in Thailand suggested that those killed had been carrying weapons and that Thai soldiers had acted in legitimate defence. According to official Cambodian figures (disputed by the Thai government), nearly 60 Cambodian loggers died in Thailand in 2013 and 2014. In the same way, a human rights group in Cambodia declared that more than 120 Cambodians had been killed on Thai soil, a good number of whom were believed to be involved in illegal logging. In a recent international summit, Cambodia urged Thailand to resolve the problem of the illegal exploitation of tropical hardwoods in their lands through protocols and legal procedures, and not through the use of force. Since the coup d'état in May 2014, it is estimated that some 200,000 undocumented Cambodian had returned to Cambodia, either voluntarily, or through deportation.

Arms Exports

In 2015, Thailand increased their weapons imports. In terms of actual exports, the EU delivered €134 million in technology, firing control systems, ammunition, military aircraft, small arms, and above all a large quantity of weapons for which there is little data. Authorised exports, reached €2.26 billion, a huge increase from €660 million in 2014. Among the main categories were warships, military aircraft, explosives, light arms and artillery, and chemical agents. The main European Union suppliers of arms to Thailand are France, Sweden, Czech Republic, and Spain.



UZBEKISTAN

Overview of the situation: Uzbekistan, an ex-soviet republic with major natural gas reserves and one of the main global exporters of cotton, was the setting for a number of tense situations related to several socio-political crises. On the one hand, the presidency of Islam Karimov (in power since 1989, first as leader of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and since 1991 as the president of the independent republic, until his death in 2016) was characterised as an authoritarian regime with policies persecuting any social or political opposition, human rights violations, and systemic torture in the judicial system. The social and political tension rose in 2005, after the violent repression of some protests in Andijan, which caused hundreds of deaths – between 500 and 1000, according to estimates – and more than a thousand refugees. The slaughter led to selective sanctions and an embargo on weapons sales from the US and the EU against the regime, which was later lifted despite a lack of notable improvements in the human rights situation. In the following years, serious human rights violations and the arrests of opposition leaders and activists continued unabated. As well, the country faces serious security threats due to regional insurgency from Islamist groups, including the armed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), with bases in zones of Afghanistan; and the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). In 2015, the IMU pledged allegiance to the armed group ISIS.

Developments of 2015

Uzbekistan continues to be setting of multiple socio-political conflicts, with a serious situation of human rights violations. International organisations and local defenders of human rights condemned the authorities' grave human rights record, including the use of torture and other abuses against human rights activists, political opposition or peoples perceived as a threat to the State. During the year, there were several notorious cases, such as the arrest in January of the director of the independent NGO Human Rights Defenders Alliance of Uzbekistan, Elena Urlaeva, after publishing reports of forced labour in the cotton growing region of Tashkent, and condemning the government of torture and sexual violence. Urlaeva was released without charges. Amnesty International (AI) condemned the systemic use of torture and other abuses by police to those in custody in order to elicit confessions or to incriminate others in the country.³ People with charges of felonies against the state or relatives involved in terrorism were particularly likely to undergo torture, according to AI, which also showed that the judicial system was basing a large part of the convictions on confessions which had been made under torture, while it continued to systematically ignore accusations of torture and abuse, and throw them out of the court, regardless of the evidence.

As well, the pressure on sectors considered to be connected to armed Islamist insurgents, in a year in which the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) announced their allegiance to ISIS. According to state intelligence services, between 500 and 600 people with Uzbek nationality were fighting in the ranks of ISIS around the end of the year. Uzbek authorities arrested hundreds of people suspected of association with ISIS and other groups. Between 5,000 and 15,000 persons remained in prison on charges related to religious extremism or belonging to illegal religious groups, according to estimates collected by the US State Department. AI reported that in 2015 migrant workers returning to the country were particularly affected by anti-terrorist measures, with arrests and processing for extremism, and AI republished condemnations of human rights defenders of the use of torture on returning migrant workers to obtain confessions of connections to ISIS. Between November and December, half a thousand people were arrested in various parts of the country, according to press sources, including dozens of migrants who had returned from Russia and Turkey. The authorities blocked social networks and communication

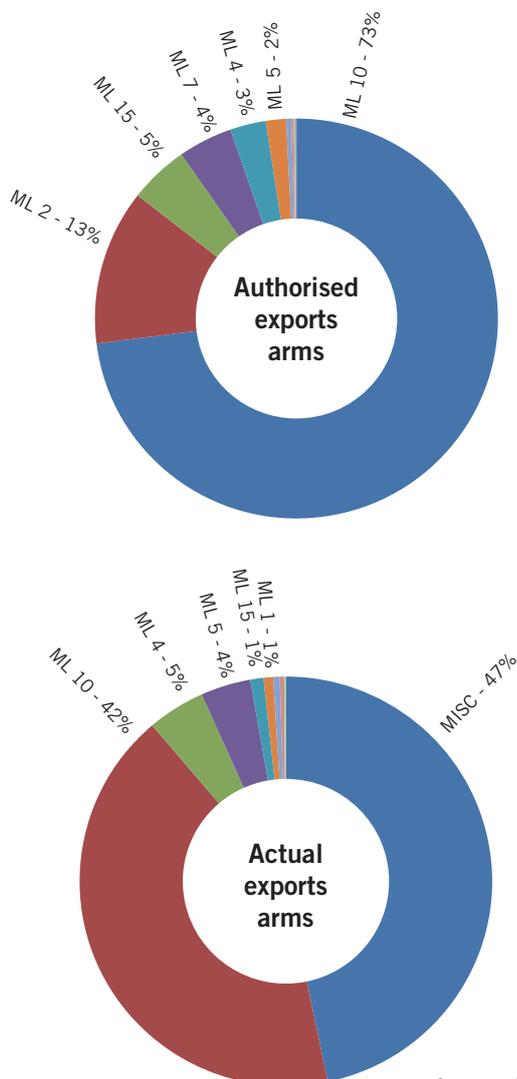
3. Amnesty International, Report 2015/2016. *The state of the world's human rights*. AI, 2016.

platforms. As well, the regime gave neighbourhood committees the authority to inform authorities of suspicious people with links to groups considered to be extremists. As well, during the year, anti-terrorist troop manoeuvres were carried out in Tashkent, Andijan, and Bukhara.

Arms Exports

The value of arms exports to Uzbekistan, as well as the value of licenses approved for this country, rose significantly in 2015 from the previous year, going from €9 million to €130 million, with the unspecified category of Miscellaneous being the leading export, closely followed by military aircraft, explosive devices (bombs, torpedoes, rockets, and missiles) and targeting systems. The majority of licenses approved belong to the categories of military aircraft, light arms and artillery, imaging systems and toxic chemical and biological agents.

The main providers of EU arms in Uzbekistan in 2015 were France, Spain, and Bulgaria.



Source: the authors

2.4. EUROPE

AZERBAIJAN

Overview of the situation:

Azerbaijan's unresolved conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave with an Armenian majority, with independentist aspirations to form part of Armenia, but which formally belongs to Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh was the setting of an armed conflict between 1991 and 1994, preceded by a deterioration of the inter-community relations, with harassment and pogroms against the Armenian and Azerbaijani population in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. The armed conflict expanded to become an international one, with Armenia joining the fray. Districts around Nagorno-Karabakh were taken by Armenian forces. The conflict led to the deaths of around 20,000 people and forcibly displaced more than a million. A cease-fire agreement in 1994 put an end to the war, creating a situation of unresolved conflict. Since then, the negotiation process, which was mediated by the OSCE, has broken down many times. Both the zone of conflict and the border between Azerbaijan and Armenia are now highly militarized, and the cease-fire is often broken. The situation has led the two countries to an arms race. As well, internally, Azerbaijan is the setting of human rights violations.

Developments of 2015

In 2015, the situation deteriorated concerning the unresolved conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory and control of the surrounding districts, with an increase in the use of heavy arms and civilian casualties. Human rights continue to be violated in Azerbaijan. As for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, a new period of escalation led the OSCE to warn, in October, of the use of heavy artillery. Analysts pointed out that the introduction of heavy artillery which had begun in 2014 (60mm, 82mm, and 120mm mortars) was continuing, with the addition of unguided rockets (122mm and TR 107mm).⁴ During the entire year, both the respective governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh accused each other of violations of the cease-fire agreement. There was violence all throughout the year. In January there was an increase in the violence, with more than a dozen killed and 20 injured. In the same month, Azerbaijani forces shot grenades and mortar shells toward the Tavush region, and claimed to have shot down a drone near the town of Ağdam, an attack which was denied by the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities. The organisation mediating the peace process – the OSCE Minsk group – reacted to the escalation, which was continuing along the lines of the 2014 escalation in hostilities – and called upon Azerbaijan to stay committed to find a peaceful resolution to the

4. Mikail Darbinyan, *Nagorno Karabaj 2015: actualización de un conflicto en rápido deshielo (Nagorno Karabaj 2015: a update on a conflict which is rapidly thawing)*, Comentario UNISCI No. 94, Complutense University of Madrid.

conflict, and upon Armenia to take all measures to reduce tension, and for both sides to follow the terms of the cease-fire. In March the tension rose again, with new clashes and allegations that Azerbaijan had caused the deaths of some 20 soldiers in the line of contact. Nagorno-Karabakh forces condemned Azerbaijani incursions into areas under their control. The acting president of the OSCE expressed concern halfway through the year for the unprecedented number of casualties – both fighters and civilians – in the first months of 2015.

In the second month of the year the tension was high. Azerbaijani authorities accused Armenia of shooting at Azerbaijani positions in mid-July, with at least one Azerbaijani soldier killed. In September, the Armenian authorities accused Azerbaijan of killing three civilians in Tavush province. Reacting to these escalations, the Minsk group urged the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to accept the creation of an OSCE mechanism to investigate violations of the cease-fire agreement. Armenia agreed to discuss the details of the measure, and the OSCE urged Azerbaijan to do the same. Nagorno-Karabakh authorities accused Azerbaijan of shelling by tanks and grenade launchers. Shortly thereafter, following diplomatic efforts during the whole year, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Switzerland under the auspices of the OSCE. Both expressed their support for the work with the co-mediators of the proposals for measures to reduce and prevent outbreaks of violence on the line of contact and on the shared border, including measures for investigation.

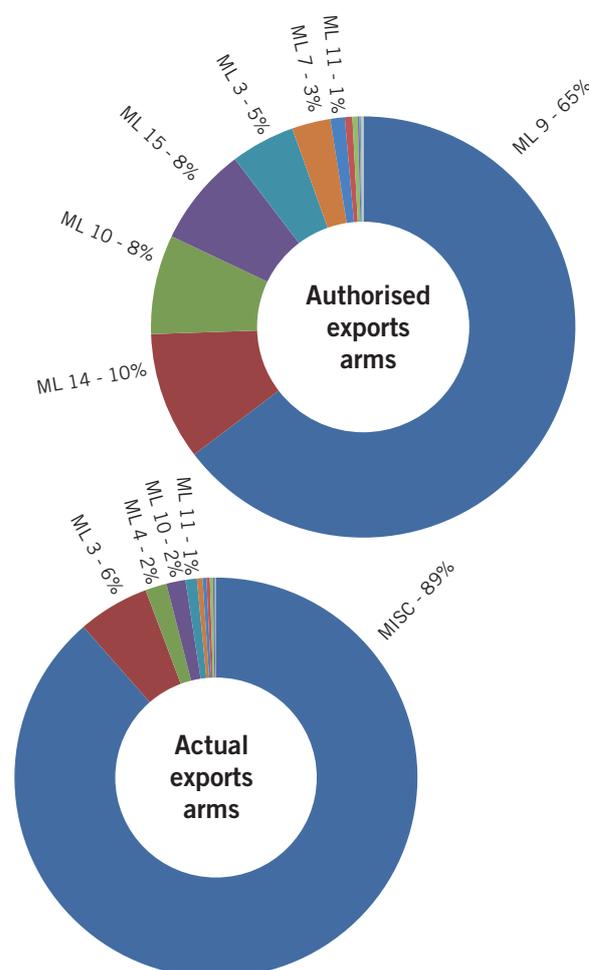
Both Azerbaijan as well as Armenia carried out large-scale military exercises during the year. In February, the Azerbaijani Army carried out manoeuvres next to the border, deploying 20,000 soldiers. In early September, Armenia carried out military exercises (Shant-2015), which included the deployment of tank units, motorized infantry, and artillery. At the same time, Azerbaijani military exercises mobilized around 700 armoured vehicles, 500 missiles and artillery units, 40 planes, 50 helicopters, and 20 army vessels, according to the Ministry of Defence. At the end of September, Armenian and Russian forces carried out their annual joint military exercises, including the simulation of combat and the destruction of enemy groups over the border.

Local and international defenders of human rights continued to condemn Azerbaijan for internal policies making it a setting for human rights violations. Amnesty International warned of repression toward the civil population and the

persecution of the political opposition.⁵ The NGO warned that during 2015 the police used violence to prevent and break up peaceful protests. Among these acts, crowds protesting the death of a civilian in police custody in August in Mingchevir were attacked with tear gas, shock grenades, and beaten with batons.⁶

Arms Exports

in 2015, Azerbaijan received licenses for arms exports valued at €938 million. Of this amount, more than €606 million were from the categories of military vessels and warships, which were added to the Caucasian republic's military fleet on the Caspian sea. With regards to actual exports from 2015, valued at €158 million, the most exported category was unspecified arms from the category Miscellaneous, which represented 89% of the total value, followed by ammunition, and by bombs, torpedoes, rockets, and missiles. The main commercial partners of Azerbaijan in the EU were France, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Spain.



Source: the authors

5. Amnesty International, *Report 2015/2016. The state of the world's human rights*. AI, 2016.

6. Amnesty International, *Report 2015/2016. The state of the world's human rights*. AI, 2016.

RUSSIA

Overview of the situation:

Russia, a country with great amounts of natural resources, especially hydrocarbons, has been the setting for a number of tense situations since its independence in 1991 after the decomposition of the USSR. The instability of the first years after the fall of the USSR, led to a regime which is considered to be authoritarian, under the leadership of Vladimir Putin (President from 2000 to 2008, Prime Minister from 2008 to 2012, and then President again since 2012). Since his arrival to power, Putin has reinforced vertical political control over the institutions and the mass media, and has dismantled the power acquired by oligarchs of Yeltsin's era, sympathisers of the liberal opposition. At the same time, the situation has led to human rights abuses, including persecution of defenders of human rights, political opponents, and independent journalists. Tension between the regime and opposing actors in the civil society have worsened at various points, such as in 2012, with widespread anti-government protest. As well, the region in the north of the Caucasus is the scene of a number of different conflicts, with federal and local security forces clashing with groups of Islamist insurgents calling for the creation of a Caucasian Emirate, one of which joined the armed group ISIS sometime in 2014 or 2015. The instability of the north of the Caucasus, as well as situations of tension in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Ingushetia, have their roots in the armed conflict which took place in Chechnya in the 1990s and its spread to the rest of the region. Added to this are practices of systemic corruption and serious human rights abuses by the local regimes in the North Caucasus region.

Developments of 2015

In addition to the armed conflict in Dagestan, there continues to be a situation of tension in which federal and local security forces clash with Islamist insurgents in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Ingushetia.⁷ The death toll in Chechnya has dropped, while that of Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia was similar to that of 2014. According to estimates by Caucasian Knot, a dozen people died in Chechnya and 15 were injured (compared to 52 mortalities and 65 wounded in 2014). In Kabardino-Balkaria, in 2015, 47 people died in the conflict, and one more wounded (compared to the 48 dead and 17 wounded in 2014) and in Ingushetia 16 people died and 5 were wounded (18 and 16, respectively, in 2014). Among the significant events of the year, top leaders of the insurgencies in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia, as well as those of Dagestan, proclaimed their membership in the armed group ISIS, which in June announced the creation of the province of the Caucasus Province of ISIS (*Vilayat Kavkaz*), formed by Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia and the combined province of Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia. ISIS named Rustam Asildarov (also known as Abu Muhammad Kadarsky), originally from Dagestan,

as the new Emir of the Vilayat Kavkaz. However, some minor sectors of the insurgency maintained their loyalty to the Caucasian Emirate.

During the year, there were several violent incidents in Kabardino-Balkaria. Among the violence was the death in November of a supposed leader of ISIS in Kabardino-Balkaria, Robert Zankishiev (emir Abdullah). This same month, some 15 combatants were shot down in special operations near the capital Nalchik. Meanwhile, in Chechnya, there were bomb attacks, as well as violent incidents with firearms, although the number of incidents and mortalities dropped significantly from 2014. Among the violence, two combatants died in January during a special operation of the security forces in Naur district, in which four soldiers were also injured. Three people died as a result of an explosion beside a dam near the capitol, Grozny, in February, after which nearly a hundred people were arrested for questioning. As well, authorities maintained the pressure against Salafi Muslims, including searches in mosques and the arrest of civilians. Defenders of human rights were also attacked, including the kidnapping of an activist near Grozny in October, who was later released, as well as attacks at the offices of the Local Committee against Torture. As well, Ingushetia was also the setting of several violent incidents. During a firefight with security forces in October in Nazran, the insurgent leader of the district of Sunzha in Ingushetia, Beslan Makhauri (alias *Emir Muhammad*), originally from Chechnya, was shot down along with Ilyas Vedzizhev, leader of the insurgent organisation of Nazran. Also, in relation to the Russian Federation as a whole, both local and international human rights organisations have condemned serious restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, harassment of NGOs, arrests of people on the basis of charges under ambiguous national security legislation, and harassment of journalists covering the situation in the North Caucasus.⁸

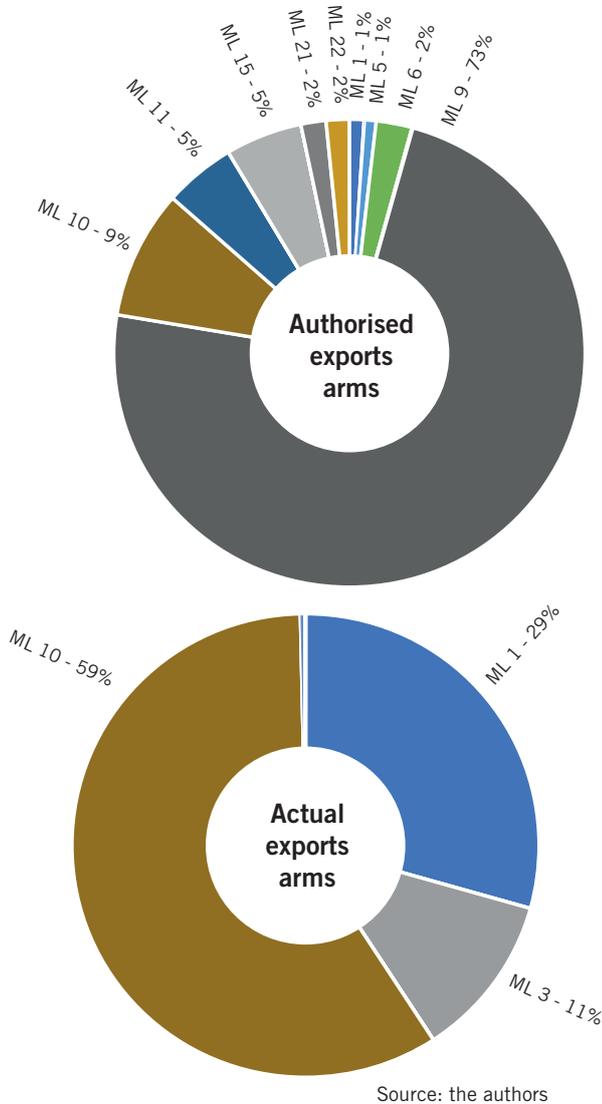
Arms Exports

EU reports pointed to a reduction in weapons exports to Russia in 2015 with respect to 2014. Exports from the EU in 2015 reached €88,930,314 in categories such as military aircraft, small arms, and ammunition. However, export authorisations sky-rocketed from the previous year (an increase of €240,492,399) to a total of €1,039,519,830. The categories authorised were warships, image forming systems, electronics, armoured vehicles and tanks, as well as small arms and firing control

7. The situation in the republic of Dagestan, considered as an armed conflict, is analysed in the publication of the Delàs Centre and the School for the Culture of Peace: *The arms trade and armed conflict. An analysis of European weapons exports to countries in armed conflict*, 2018.

8. Amnesty International, Report 2015/2016. *The state of the world's human rights*. AI, 2016.

systems. France, Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic were the leading business partners in the EU weapons trade to Russia.



SERBIA

Overview of the situation:
The Serbian Republic has an unresolved conflict regarding the status of Kosovo, a territory which declared its independence in 2008 and which the Serbian government considers to be an autonomous province of Serbia. The dispute goes back decades of social and political tension, which eventually led to the 1998-9 armed conflict between Serbia and the armed Kosovo Albanian group KLA. Kosovo, with an Albanian majority population, had been an autonomous province of Serbia as part of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, and was in the 1980s the setting for increased protests and Albanian nationalist demands, a deterioration of inter-ethnic relations, and an increase in repression by the Serbian authorities, which in 1989 revoked the autonomous status of the province and in 1990 dissolved the government and the local Parliament. After years of peaceful Albanian organising, the ELK started an armed struggle. The armed conflict in Kosovo – which broke out soon after the end of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina – caused the death and disappearances

of 13,500 people, mostly civilians of Albanian descent, but also of Serbs, Roma, and other minorities. NATO carried out bombing against Serbia, without the authorization of the UN. A resolution of the UN Security Council led to the establishment of an international protectorate over Kosovo in 1999, and a process of determination of the final status was to be undertaken in 2006, though no agreement was reached among the parties. The Kosovo Parliament proclaimed independence in 2008, with the backing of the US and many EU member states, although the areas of Kosovo with a majority Serb population remained, with Serbian support, independent from Kosovan institutions. In 2011, under EU mediation, Serbia and Kosovo started a new process of dialogue to normalize relations. Both Serbia and Kosovo continue to face serious internal challenges in terms of transitional justice, human rights, and political corruption.

Developments of 2015

Human rights organisations in Serbia continued to condemn human rights violations, including attacks and threats on independent journalists, hate crimes against the LGBTI population, as well as obstacles for access to international protections in a year that more than 600,000 migrants and refugees crossed Serbia. NGOs like Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) condemned abuses and economic exploitation against refugees and migrants by Serbian Police. According to human rights organisations, the six centres for admission and reception of refugees – including one opened in July 2015 in Presevo, on the Macedonian border – were insufficient to provide basic protection, and left large numbers of people without shelter. According to AI, in November the Serbian authorities only granted entrance into the country to Afghanis, Iraqis, or Syrians. As well, the Independent Journalist Association of Serbia condemned the increasing number of attacks on journalists, with 34 attacks in 2015, compared to 20 in 2014. The Association pointed out that in the majority of cases, no formal accusation was made against the authorities, in a context of impunity, citing journalists’ mistrust in institutions charged with persecuting attacks against freedom of expression. In 2015, there were also attacks against LGBTI people and activists, according to AI. As well, the Roma minority continue to suffer discrimination and harassment, according to HRW. Human rights organisations also condemned the lack of support of the authorities in regards to persecution of the war crimes of the prior armed conflict in ex-Yugoslavia, and weak protection mechanisms for witnesses.

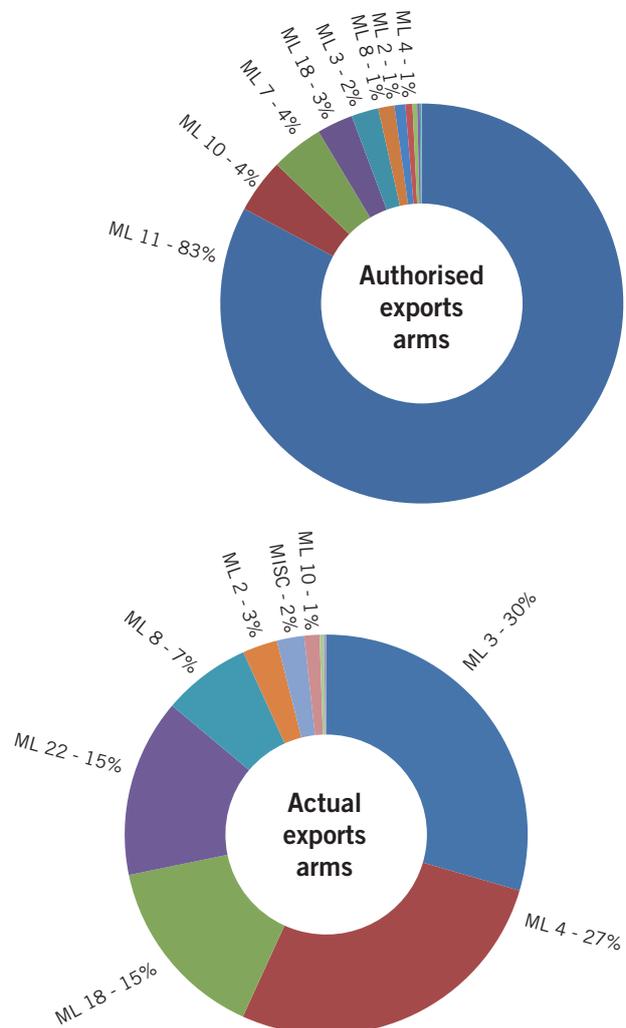
In regards to the unresolved conflict in Kosovo, the tension between the two territories was reduced in 2015. In August, the two sides reached an agreement for the establishment of an association of municipalities, which makes provisions for

administrative decentralisation of areas of Kosovo with a Serbian majority. These measures are part of the 2013 agreement between Serbia and Kosovo for the normalisation of relations (Brussels Agreement). The August accord takes into account 10 municipalities, which will have their own assembly, president elect, and flag, although still under Kosovan legislation. They will be empowered with economic development, education, medical care, and urban and rural planning, among other responsibilities, and will be able to make agreements for cooperation with other municipal assemblies. The new structure will be financed with local taxes and transfers from the Kosovan authorities, and can receive Serbian financing, although by different means than with taxes or customs duties. The agreement caused strong protests among the Kosovar Albanian political opposition, and they demanded it be revoked and launched a campaign of protest, including violent incidents in the last three months of the year, such as the release of tear gas in the Kosovo legislative chamber. Protesters opposed to the Brussels Agreement and to an agreement setting the limits of the border with Montenegro clashed with Kosovo police, resulting in dozens of wounded, including at least 50 wounded in November in the operation for the arrest of Kosovar Albanian leader of the party Vetëvendosje, Albin Kurti. AI condemned the excessive use of force by the Kosovar police during the raid. The President of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga, sent the agreement to the Constitutional Tribunal for review, which provisionally repealed it, which was criticised by Serbia. In December, the Tribunal determined that parts of the text were unconstitutional. What's more, Serbia took sides in the internal crisis generated in the early part of the year between the Kosovar government and the Serb List, a minority party. The Serbian government joined Serb List in criticising the ousting of the Minister of Communities and Returns, Aleksandar Jablanović – of Serbian Kosovar descent. Jablanović was removed from his position after making controversial and derogative statements towards Albanian Kosovars after an attack on a bus carrying Serbian pilgrims. 80 people, including 50 police, were injured in the protests demanding that Jablanović resign, and more than 100 were arrested. These were the largest protests since the unilateral declaration of independence in 2008. The tension was only made worse by the Kosovo government's to rescind on the plan to nationalise the Trepca mining complex – of which Serbia claims a 70% share and which since the end of the year has been under control of the Privatization Agency of Kosovo, a private agency accused by analysts of a lack of transparency in either ownership or policy. The initial nationalisation plans were strongly criticised by Serbia. The Kosovo governor

rescinded the proposal, which resulted in Albanian Kosovar protest, including hundreds of miners. In protest of the dismissal of Jablanović, Serb List launched a parliamentary boycott, which it ended in April, after the government reached an agreement in which there would be no unilateral steps against the interests of the Serbian Kosovar community.

Arms Exports

The value of the licenses granted for arms exports to Serbia rose very significantly in 2015 compared to the previous year. The value of exports to the Balkan nation went from €88 million in 2014, to nearly €658 million in 2015, while actual exports stayed the same in the same period. The main categories of arms exported to Serbia in 2015 were ammunition, explosives—such as rockets, torpedoes and missiles, military production systems, and technology, while within authorised exports there was a overwhelming amount of military electronics, which made up 83% of the total licenses granted. France, Bulgaria, and Czech Republic were the main exporters of EU weapons to Serbia.



2.5. THE MIDDLE EAST

SAUDI ARABIA

Overview of the situation:

Saudi Arabia is renowned for religious conservatism, wealth, and oil reserves, which give it considerable influence. As a regional power, Saudi Arabia rivals Iran and has taken on an increasingly active role in the conflicts in the Middle East. Internally, the Sunni monarchy rules over the governmental institutions with a high concentration of power and almost no tolerance for dissent. Added to the lack of political parties, there are serious restrictions on freedoms and rights, particularly affecting women and religious minorities, such as Shia Islam. The unrest affecting other countries in the Middle East encouraged protests in Saudi Arabia in 2011, particularly in the east of the country, where there is a high proportion of Shia minority. Saudi authorities responded with repression and accused Iran of promoting attempts to destabilize the regime. At the same time, the country was the setting for a number of actions by armed groups associated with al-Qaeda and ISIS.

Developments of 2015

During 2015, Saudi Arabia faced major changes in terms of internal and foreign policy and they had significant impact on the interplay of tensions confronting the country. Internally, the Saudi throne went through a period of succession. The death of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, in January, led to the ascension to the throne by his half brother Salman bin Abdulaziz, who assigned his nephew Muhammed bin Naif as Prime Minister and Crown Prince and his son Mohammed bin Salman as Minister of Defence and second in line to the throne. These changes in the upper echelons didn't mean, however, transformations in terms of the exercise of freedoms or respect for rights in the country. In fact, practices that international human rights organizations have systematically condemned, among them arbitrary detentions; repression of dissidents, activists and defenders of human rights; or policies that discriminate against women and religious minorities, particularly those of the Shia community. Human Rights Watch warned that in September the Saudi authorities had arrested nearly every founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA). Other particularly notorious cases include the corporal punishment of 50 lashes to the renowned blogger Raif Badawi (accused of promoting a liberal website and insulting religious authorities) in January; and the arrest of writer and commentator Zuhair Kutbi, for calling for political reforms in an interview in July. Additionally, it should be noted that various international NGOs called for attention to the increase in the use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, at a higher rate than the two decades prior. According to a report by Amnesty International, a total of 157 people were

executed during the year – some of them public executions – a third of which were found guilty of non-violent crimes related to illegal drugs.

At the same time, Saudi Arabia was the setting for a number of violent episodes, for the majority of which the armed group ISIS claimed responsibility, which caused the deaths of at least 40 people. Among these offensives it is worth noting the two suicide attacks perpetrated in May against Shiite mosques in the towns of Qatif and Damman, in the east of the country, which killed 26 and wounded more than a hundred. A cell of ISIS calling themselves the "Province of Naid" claimed responsibility for both attacks. Another explosive bombing against a mosque carried out by security forces in Abha, in the south of the country, cause the deaths of another 15 people in August, an action for which another ISIS affiliate, the "Province of Hijaz" took responsibility. Another person was killed in a suicide bombing against a mosque in the town of Nairan (southeast) and two police were shot in a gunfight in Qatif during the last trimester of the year. In this context, over the course of 2015, Saudi authorities carried out arrests of suspicious people connected to ISIS and terrorist activities. Some of these arrests were particularly massive, such as those in April, (93 people), Julio (431) and August (74).

In terms of foreign policy, the most significant development was the decision of Riyadh to take a direct, active role in the armed conflict in neighbouring Yemen. On March 26th, after the Yemeni president was deposed by Houthi insurgents, Saudi Arabia led an international coalition – also made up of UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, and Egypt; and with logistical support by countries such as the US and the UK – and launched an operation called "Decisive Storm" against the armed group. At the end of the year, hostilities in the framework of the conflict had caused the deaths of 6000 people, more than half of whom were civilians. The conflict also caused the deaths of 80 people in Saudi territory, mainly soldiers and guards across the border with Yemen.

The military campaign led by Riyadh was mainly centred on airstrikes, but it also included the supply of arms to forces loyal to Hadi and to the imposition of a no-fly zone and a naval blockade, a combination of measures that had a severe impact on the Yemeni population. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights accused the Saudi Arabian-led coalition of responsibility of an excessive number of offensives with civilian victims. Among these, the bombing of a factory

in the port of Al Hudaydah killed more than 30 people, attacks against civilian targets in the northern province of Sadah (a Houthi bastion) left dozens dead, the bombardments of two civilian complexes in the city of Mocha caused the death of at least 65 civilians, and airstrikes on health infrastructure, including a hospital managed by Doctors Without Borders. As well, the Coalition led by Saudi Arabia was accused of using cluster bombs in populated areas, causing deaths and injuries of numerous people. The blockade imposed by the coalition also exacerbated the situation of humanitarian crisis and food insecurity in a country highly dependent on food and fuel imports. At the end of the year it was estimated that 80% of the population required assistance. The conflict also cause massive forced displacement among the population, around one million people in 2015.

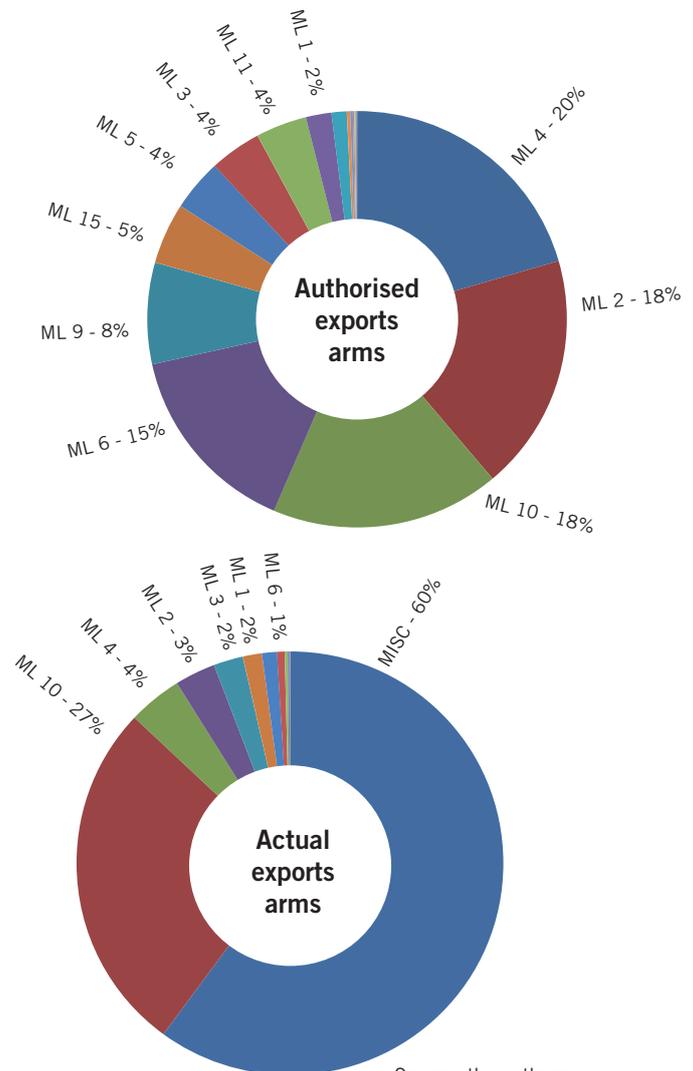
The internal and foreign policies of Saudi Arabia provoked reactions from Europe. For example, in early 2016, the European Parliament (EP) expressed their concern for the acts perpetrated by the coalition in Riyadh and by the decision of European countries to continue transferring arms to Saudi Arabia despite the prohibition established in the EU Common Position 2008/944/PESC. In this context, the EU voted with the majority in favour of the imposition of an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia due to the serious accusations of violations of humanitarian law in Yemen. In 2015 the EP also spoke out against the flogging of Raif Badawi, approving a resolution against corporal punishment which demanded the immediate release of the blogger and other Saudi prisoners. In October, Badawi was awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, given by the EP. It's worth mentioning that during 2015 the Swedish government decided to cancel arms sales to Saudi Arabia – putting an end to military cooperation going back a decade – due to the panorama of human rights violations in the country, particularly the plight of women. The measure was promoted by Minister Margot Wallström in framework of a feminist foreign policy and was adopted after Riyadh vetoed the participation of Swedish Secretary of State in a meeting of the Arab League in Egypt. In the weeks leading up to the decision, Wallström had criticised the flogging of Badawi – describing it as “medieval punishment” - and hoping to send a message to the Arab League defending the need for reforms in terms of women’s rights in the Arab world. The impasse led the Swedish government to a decision, as it had been having in internal debate over military cooperation with Saudi Arabia. The decision was a break from the customary postures of a number of western governments, which had systematically given Riyadh a privileged position,

questioning neither policies nor the human rights situation in the country.

Arms Exports

The controversy around arms exports to Saudi Arabia has not prevented that in 2015, the total of European arms purchased by the country rose to over €1.857 billion. Among the main categories, are Miscellaneous, that is to say, arms that are unspecified or concealed (making up almost 60% of the total of arms purchased), military aircraft, explosives, light arms and artillery, ammunition, small arms, and armoured vehicles and tanks.

In terms of authorised exports, which were over €22 billion, the categories which received the greatest number of licenses were explosives, light arms and artillery, and military aircraft and armoured vehicles, followed by warships, among which the Spanish firm Navantia is one of the largest providers, and by imaging and targeting equipment. The largest providers were France, Spain, Italy, and Bulgaria.



EGYPT

Overview of the situation:

Just as other countries in the region with authoritarian regimes, Egypt has been the setting for popular revolt, such as the massive protests in 2011 which ended the government of Hosni Mubarak after three decades in power. The fall of Mubarak opened an uncertain chapter notable for the tension between many groups, including sectors close to the prior regime, the military establishment striving to maintain positions of power, dissident sectors with aspirations for radical revolt, and Islamist groups, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which after years of existence as an illegal dissident movement, saw an opportunity to rise to power. The victory of the MB in the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2012 seemed to open a new period in the country, but the ascendancy to power of the Islamists in Egypt was brief. Halfway through 2013, the first Islamist president, Mohamed Morsi, was overthrown by a military coup d'état which meant the return of the military to the front lines of power, headed up by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Since then, the internal scene has been troubled by persecution and repression of the Islamist opposition – the MB was labelled an illegal, terrorist organisation – as well as other forms of dissidence; human rights abuses abound, the police and the military have been given increased powers within the exceptional laws, particularly in the wake of the intensification of the armed conflict in the Sinai.

Developments of 2015

Throughout 2015, Egypt continued to be affected by intense internal conflict, brought about by a campaign of persecution and repression of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) as well as other sectors of the political opposition, for the passing of laws restricting the exercise of freedoms and the expansion of powers of authorities, for frequent human rights abuses, and for multiple episodes of violence which caused the deaths of dozens of people – at least 40 during the year. Regarding the episodes of violence, some of the most serious incidents happened in the first trimester, within the framework of the protests around another anniversary of the ousting of Hosni Mubarak in 2011. According to press reports, at least 20 people lost their lives in the clashes between protesters and security forces, or after being shot by police in the protests. In this context, one of the most emblematic events that caused the most public outcry was the assassination of two women by police gunshots, the activist and poet Shaimaa al-Sabbagh, who participated in a peaceful march in Cairo, and a 17 year old girl who took part in a pro-Islamist protest in Alexandria. Other violent events that stood out during the year were the result of the security forces, or the MB, a group declared to be an illegal terrorist organisation by the Egyptian authorities. For example, a search operation to allegedly break up a plot for suicide bombings in the country resulted in the death of between 9 and 13 leaders of the MB in Cairo in the middle of the year. Security forces assured

that there was a firefight, but the Islamist group refuted the authorities' version of the events and assured that the group was unarmed and was merely meeting to coordinate help to the families of members of the MB who had been killed or were serving prison sentences. In July, another 6 people died in clashes between Egyptian forces and members of the MB, who felt it was their calling to rebel against the Abdel Fattah el-Sisi regime.

In parallel to these events, during 2015 the judicial persecution of the MB continued, including the highest leaders, court cases with a lack of guarantees for a fair trial. In May the Egyptian authorities condemned ex-president Mohamed Morsi and another 114 people to death. The measure received criticisms on the part of many international organisations, among them the UN and the EU, via the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs. In 2015, human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) warned of the rise in death sentences in the country. Since the ousting of Morsi in a coup d'état in July 2013 and up until the end of 2015, 547 death sentences had been passed down for political violence, the majority against members of the MB. Most of these sentences were being appealed. HRW pointed out that at least 3,000 people had been tried and convicted by military tribunals, and that in most of the massive trials against members of the MB responsibility had not assigned on an individual basis. Local and international NGOs also raised an outcry against numerous human rights abuses, condemning large numbers of deaths in police custody or disappearances after being arrested. According to data from the Egyptian NGO Nadeem Center, a total of 272 people had lost their lives while detained during the first year of the government of el-Sisi and another 119 were still disappeared at the end of 2015. In this context, at the end of the year, various police were sentenced for torture and for the death by beating of people associated with the MB.

The Worldwide Movement for Human Rights (FIDH) also warned of the increase of sexual violence against persons arrested by Egyptian security forces after the coup in July 2013. FIDH reported that sexual violence was a practice widely used during the arrests and in the detention centres, particularly against sympathisers of the opposition to the el-Sisi government, but also against protesters, activists, and people accused of threatening the moral order. Women, students, and members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex community were among the victims of this type of mistreatment. Women made accusations of sexual violence being used during searches and during periods of arrests

against activists and political prisoners. Sources close to the MB warned of the use of sexual violence against women of the group which were in custody, including more than twenty cases of rape. As well, a greater prevalence of sexual violence was observed in the public space in general.

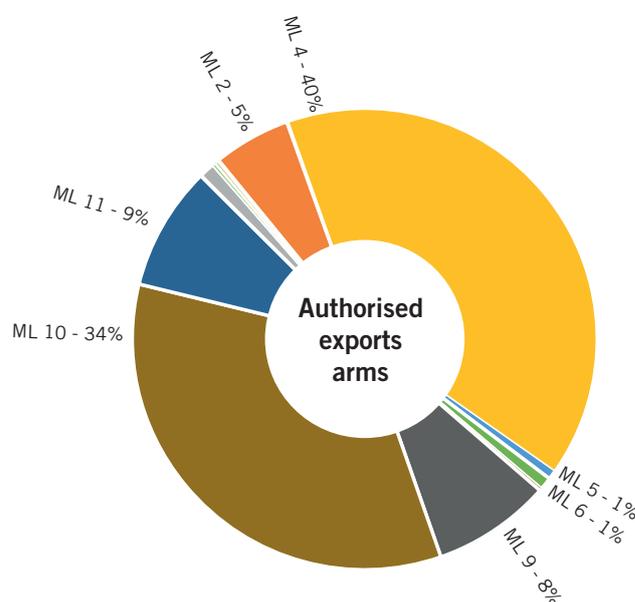
During the second half of 2015, it is also worth noting the approval of new anti-terrorist legislation following on the heels of the escalation of violence in the Sinai Peninsula.⁹ Human rights associations highlighted that these laws constituted a new tool by the authorities to persecute and silence critical voices, taking into account that they were consecrated under the ambiguous concept of terrorism. According to the Egyptian Minister of the Interior, around 12,000 people have been arrested under charges of terrorism between January and October 2015. Additionally, this new legislation increased the powers of the security forces (allowing them to watch suspects of terrorism almost indefinitely without previous judicial authorisation), increased the death penalties and life sentences for activities related to terrorism, and placed sanctions on dissemination of information contradicting the Ministry of Defence version of the events (including fines and up to a year ban on work in journalism). This regulation, together with a blockade on press or international observers' access to the Sinai Peninsula complicated the possibility of an independent monitoring of the crisis in the Sinai and of its consequences upon the civil population. In this context, it is worth mentioning that press associations condemned an increase in the number of journalists arrested throughout the year. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the Egyptian National Security Agency forbade many Egyptian men and women to travel outside the country, including activists, politicians, and academics.

In terms of foreign policy, it is worth mentioning that Egypt intervened in Libya, launching airstrikes against ISIS positions in Derna, in February, after the armed group kidnapped and decapitated 20 Egyptians of Coptic faith. The Egyptian offensive caused the deaths of at least 7 civilians, according to press reporting. Also, in March, Egypt joined the international coalition led and promoted by Saudi Arabia to intervene in the armed conflict in Yemen. Cairo sent four warships to the Gulf of Aden, and although military sources ruled out the deployment of ground forces, it wasn't clear how else Egypt would participate in the coalition's offensives, which had already caused a severe civilian death toll¹⁰. Despite this collusion, the US informed that

it would renew the provision of military aid to Egypt – which had been blocked since the coup d'état against Morsi. This meant a green light for the delivery of twelve F-16 fighter planes and Twenty Harpoon missiles, among other material. Previously, in December 2014, they had delivered 10 Apache helicopters for the anti-terrorist campaign. It is worth noting that the decision of the US government was adopted despite warnings from US State Department that Egypt had introduced laws and measures that would restrict freedom of expression and that abuses committed by the security forces would go unpunished. In the case of the EU, after the political violence in Egypt halfway through 2013 – and especially after the deaths of hundreds of people during security force operations in August of that same year – the EU Foreign Affairs Council considered that the actions of the government forces had been disproportionate. As a consequence, the EU states agreed to suspend licences for exports of material that could be used for internal repression, and decided to revise exports of military equipment and aid to the country. However, this measure did not translate into any kind of rule or regulation, nor was it clearly established what restrictions nor with what aim, and so it has been seen as a non-binding political commitment. And so, since 2014, various EU states have signed contracts and provided arms of small and large calibre to Egypt.¹¹

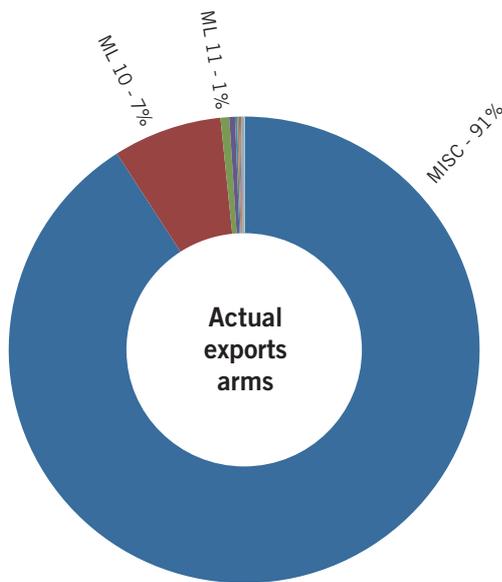
Arms Exports

Egypt is the second country in the Middle East and North African region, after Saudi Arabia, in terms of receiving EU arms exports. In terms of actual exports, the total purchases climbed to € 1.37 billion. Although the majority of the armament was



9. Egypt, particularly the Sinai Peninsula, is the setting of an armed conflict pitting the armed security forces with a series of armed groups, including an affiliate of ISIS in the country, which calls itself "the Province of Sinai".

10. Also see "Saudi Arabia" in this same report.
 11. SIPRI, EU arms embargo on Egypt, 3 October 2017.



Source: the authors

classified in the Miscellaneous category – €1.25 billion, there are significant amounts of other categories, such as military aircraft, helicopters and drones representing 82% of the rest, equivalent to €102 million. After this were the categories of electronics, tanks, small arms and ammunition. 2015 authorisations for exports rose to €19.47 billion, of which 40% were explosives such as missiles, bombs, rockets, and grenades. Also authorised were military aircraft, electronics, warships and light arms and artillery. Among the leading suppliers to Egypt are France, the UK, Spain, and Italy.

IRAQ

Overview of the situation:

In addition to being a scene of a high-intensity armed conflict, Iraq is the setting for tension associated with the Kurdish question. The Kurdish people represent between 15% and 20% of the total population, and are mainly concentrated in the north of the country. After the failure to fulfil hopes of an independent Kurdish state in the region, the Kurdish people have had a difficult time fitting into the Iraqi state and have suffered from periodic and difficult episodes of very bloody repression during the regime of Saddam Hussein and during the Iran-Iraq war. In the 1990s, after the end of the Gulf War, the creation of a no-fly zone in the north of Iraq favoured the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the development of an experiment in self-governance. After the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, this autonomy was recognised by the institutions within the federal framework and enshrined in the new Iraqi constitution. Despite this the differences between the Iraqi central government and the KRG have persisted as a result of conflicts around the administration of energy resources and the status of the so-called “disputed territories”. Aside from the interplay with Baghdad, Iraqi Kurdistan is also the setting for tension between distinct Kurdish factions. Some of the main Kurdish groups in Iraq also maintain an ambivalent relationship, sometimes in collaboration and other times in rivalry and confrontation with other groups operating in other countries in the region, most notably the PKK.

Developments of 2015

The armed conflict afflicting Iraq was the backdrop for a tense situation between the government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), as well as the internal disputes between different factions of Iraqi Kurdistan and with other Kurdish groups in the region. On the one hand, the tension between Baghdad and Erbil became evident in the framework of the offensive against the armed group ISIS, in which Kurdish groups participated actively, or around the administration of energy resources. One of the most controversial subjects was the US provision of arms to the Peshmergas. The reports of a possible delivery by Washington of weapons to the KRG without asking for authorisation from Baghdad set off alarms in the Federal government and this threatened to intensify the tension. The US government wound up cancelling the plan to transfer arms directly to the KRG and agreed that any administration of weapons would be intermediated with agreement from Baghdad. The tension between the KRG and the Iraqi central government also was expressed, as in previous years, in the disagreements around petroleum extraction, especially the decision by Erbil to export this resource without authorisation by Baghdad from the areas under its control, including Kirkuk – one of the areas under dispute and which the KRG began controlling in 2014, after the advance of ISIS and the retreat of Iraqi forces from the area. Erbil and Baghdad had come to an agreement around the sharing of petroleum profits in the end of 2014, but over the length of 2015, each accused the other of not having kept the agreement.

Meanwhile, alongside this tension between Erbil and Baghdad, the whole year there was rivalry between Kurdish groups, both in the framework of the struggle against ISIS as in the political arena. Some analysts highlighted that the Kurdish forces’ participation in the military campaign against ISIS made the internal divisions between the PDK and the PUK obvious, since the combatants associated with the two Kurdish political groups were divided over areas of influence and, in practice, showed problems of coordination. In this division of zones, and not without rivalry between groups, the PUK was responsible for the southeast from the Iranian border to Kirkuk, while the area from there to the west, to the border with Syria, was under the charge of the KDP. The international supply of arms to these groups generated special worries for some experts for the potential to feed a climate of instability, and the lack of control or follow-through could encourage factionalism and accentuate the

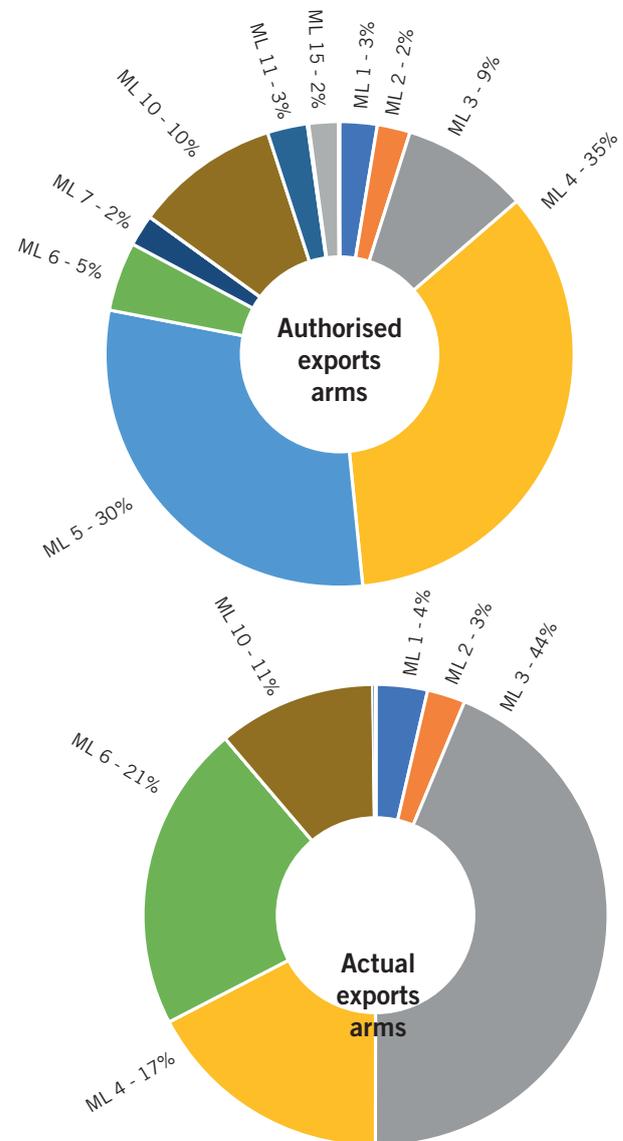
internal divisions between Kurdish militias.¹² The rise of ISIS in Iraq also encouraged the process of fragmentation, militarisation, and proliferation of the militias. In the political arena Kurdish groups in Iraq also showed disagreement, especially around the figure of Masoud Barzani and his continuation in power. His mandate, which had already expired in 2013 and been extended for two years, was due to end in August 2015, and led to a situation of organizational ambiguity. Demonstrations against the government of the KRG led to the arrest of dozens of people by security forces and in some cases, led to deaths, of at least two people.

Externally, during the whole of 2015 there were also clearly frictions between Kurdish groups in Iraq and those operating mainly in Turkey and Syria, particularly the PKK and YPG. The tensions were evident in disputes over the control of zones like Sinjar. Additionally, Turkey intervened in the territory under the control of the KRG to launch attacks against the PKK. It was alleged that at the end of the year, Barzani's PDK also gave the green light for an land incursion of Turkish forces in the province of Ninewa, an event that generated new controversy among the authorities in Baghdad who condemned the violation of Iraqi territorial sovereignty and demanded that Turkish troops withdraw.

Arms Exports

In Iraq, after the military occupation of 2003, there has been a context of permanent violence. However this did not prevent the increase of weapons exports in 2005, 2009, 2014, and again in 2015. In fact, in terms of actual exports, the EU in 2015 doubled the value of exports to Iraq to €380 million (from €123 million in 2014). The categories of military exports included: munitions, armoured vehicles and tanks, explosives such as grenades, missiles, bombs, and small and light arms, and artillery. However, in terms of authorised exports, the arms trade between the EU and Iraq is a booming business, with €2 billion in authorisations, more than double the €760 million in 2014. Among the categories most requested are targeting systems; explosives; military aircraft; tanks; electronic equipment; toxic, biological, and chemical agents; and thousands of small arms, light arms, and artillery. It should be noted that this growing tendency has its origin in the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU, where it was agreed that due to the apparition of DAESH, some EU member states should support the Iraqi Ministry of Defence with supplies of military

material. Among the leading supplier nations are France, Bulgaria, Spain, and the Czech Republic.



Source: the authors

ISRAEL

Overview of the situation:

The regional repercussions of the Arab-Israeli conflict persist and continue feeding the tense relationship between Israel and countries such as Lebanon and Syria. With regard to Lebanon, since 1948 the country has become the recipient of thousands of Palestinian refugees and since 1979 has hosted the leaders of the PLO, which has been the motive for systematic Israeli attacks and led to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in 1982. In this context, Hezbollah, a Shia group allied to the Syrian regime and based in Lebanon, emerged with an agenda of resistance to Israeli occupation and for the liberation of Palestine. Since then, Israel and Hezbollah periodically clashed, and in 2006 led to large-scale armed conflict. As regards Syria, their relationship with Israel is conditioned by the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights since the Arab-Israeli war of 1967.

12. Joost Hilterman, *Clearing the Landmines from Iraqi Kurdistan's Future*, International Crisis Group, 24 March 2015.

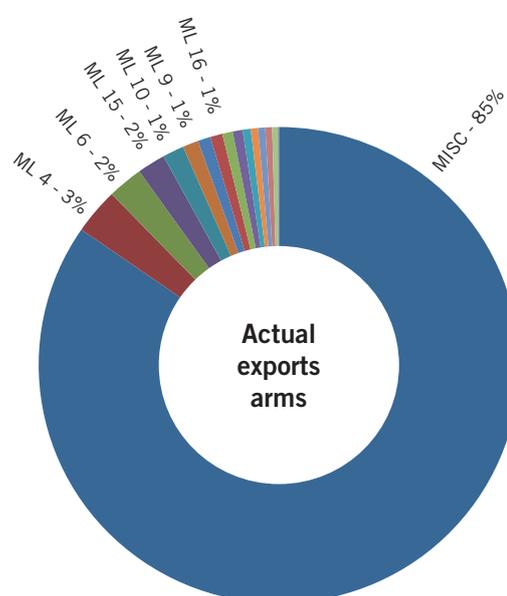
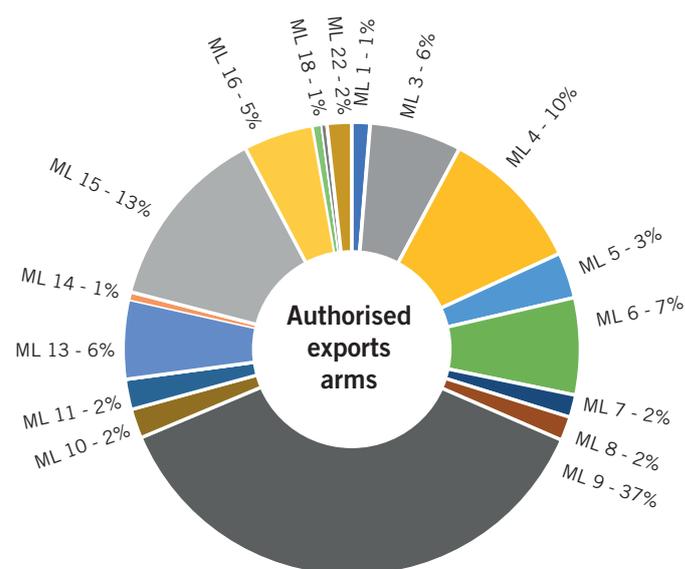
Developments of 2015

Aside from being the scene of an armed conflict, in 2015 Israel also continued to be the centre of international tension with both Syria and Lebanon, particularly in the border areas. The violent events during the year caused the deaths of 18 people and were considered to be the worst since the war between Israel and the Lebanese Shia group Hezbollah in 2006. The incidents with the greatest number of victims were produced in January, after an Israeli airstrike in the Syrian-controlled Golan heights caused the deaths of 7 people. Among the victims of the Israeli helicopter attack were six militants of Hezbollah – including a senior official of the group and the son of another leader assassinated by Israel in 2008 – a Iranian general of the republican guard which was in Syrian territory to assist the forces of Bashar al-Assad within the context of the internal conflict according to the official Iranian version. Israeli sources, however, justified the offensive arguing that the group were planning attacks against Israel. In the months leading up to this action, Israel had launched another series of attacks into Syrian territory with the intention – according to the Israeli government – of stopping the transfers of arms to Hezbollah, which led to threats of a response from the Lebanon-based leader of the organisation, Hassan Nasrallah. And so, after the offensive in January, Hezbollah responded to an Israeli attack, an event which led to an escalation of exchange of fire on the border which led to the deaths of three people and left another seven wounded. All were Israeli soldiers, with the exception of a soldier from the United Nations mission in Lebanon, UNIFIL, of Spanish origin, who died as a cause of Israeli fire in the Shebaa Farms area.

The intensification of the violence at the start of the year fed speculations of a possible escalation of the violence between actors involved in the dispute – in addition to the armed conflict in Syria – but in the following months it became clear that none of the parties sought to feed a new cycle of direct confrontation. Despite that, during 2015 there were various outbreaks of violence related to the tension. In April Israel launched an attack against an alleged Hezbollah arms convoy, and in August Israeli forces attacked the area of the Golan Heights in response to an offensive against a nearby Israeli town. Israel also responded with missile fire to errant rockets. After the siege of a Druze town in Syria by the armed group al-Nusra Front (linked to al-Qaeda) which led to 20 deaths, leaders of the Israeli Druze community demanded that Israel protect the Druze community in Syria. In this context in June, there was an incident in which the Israeli Druze community living in the

Golan Heights attacked an ambulance carrying wounded Syrians, in order to find out if they formed part of one of the armed groups operating in Syria. One of the wounded died after being beaten beyond exhaustion.

The tension again rose at the end of the year, due to the death by airstrike of Samir Qantar, one of the supreme leaders of Hezbollah, as well as seven other people. The offensive was attributed to Israel, which neither confirmed nor denied the news. Qantar had been freed in 2008 as part of an exchange between Israeli and Hezbollah prisoners, after spending 30 years in Israeli prison condemned to three life sentences for the assassination of three Israelis in 1979. Hezbollah publicly declared their intention to avenge the death of Qantar, and so shortly thereafter, three rockets were launched from Lebanon into the north of Israel, although there were no victims or damage.



Source: the authors

Arms Exports

Data from the EU report shows that actual exports to Israel for 2015 are more than €293 million. The materials exported include explosive devices, armoured vehicles and tanks, imaging equipment, military aircraft, small arms, targeting equipment, and a large quantity of unspecified weapons in the category Miscellaneous. In terms of authorised exports, these have risen to €966 million. Most requested this year were warships, imaging equipment and explosives. The leading EU exporting nations to Israel are Germany, France, the UK, and Italy.

LEBANON

Overview of the situation:

With a complex internal political landscape, in the last years Lebanon has undergone a political, social, and institutional crisis troubled by confessional divisions. In 2005 the assassination of the then ex-Prime Minister Rafic Hariri set into motion a series of events which led to the withdrawal of the Syrian armed forces from the country, a troop presence that had lasted three decades. In the country, there was still polarisation between sectors suspicious of the Syrian presence in the country (led by Saad Hariri, son of the assassinated ex-Prime Minister) and groups close to the Damascus regime, such as the Shia group Hezbollah. The outbreak of armed conflict in Syria in 2011 and the active implication of Hezbollah in favour of Damascus has had various repercussions in Lebanon. Tensions have risen between Lebanese political and social sectors, and the violence has spread to Lebanese territory in the form of bombing attacks and clashes in border areas. As well, the country has become one of the main recipients of the Syrian refugee population. Simultaneously, another dynamic of tension persists, the backdrop of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the 1982 Israeli invasion and subsequent occupation. Hezbollah, which was born in the early 1980s with an agenda of resistance to Israel and the liberation of Palestine, has had periodic clashes with Israeli forces, including a large-scale armed conflict in 2006. The mission of the UN in Lebanon, UNIFIL (created in 1978 to supervise the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the south of Lebanon) extended its mandate and since 2006 monitors the cease-fire between both sides.

Developments of 2015

As in previous years, during 2015 Lebanon was the setting for several tense situations. On one hand the country continued to be stuck in a persistent internal political crisis, and the country also continued to be harshly affected by the consequences of the armed conflict in neighbouring Syria. Lebanon also continued to see frequent episodes of violence related to the historical dispute between the Shia group Hezbollah and Israel.¹³ In the political sphere, the vacancy in the executive branch continued throughout the year, as

constant disagreement between different political factions prevented a consensus on naming the Presidency, vacant since 2014. As well, a national dialogue was initiated re-establishing contact between Hezbollah and the Future Movement after three years of impasse, but although various meetings were held, no important advances were made. These political and institutional roadblocks led to popular demonstrations condemning the inaction and corruption of the political class and the consequences of this crisis on the population in terms of basic services (particularly visible were the protests around the lack of garbage collection services). Some of the protests turned violent, with protesters and police injured, as well as various arrests.

Adding to this internal trouble, the ongoing war in neighbouring Syria spilled over into Lebanon in outbreaks of violence in border areas, as well as bombing attacks in cities such as Beirut and Tripoli. In November the Lebanese capitol was the setting of the bloodiest attack of the year, a double suicide bombing in a neighbourhood with a Shia majority under Hezbollah control, an attack which caused the deaths of at least 43 people and left 200 more injured. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack, considered as a punishment to Hezbollah for their support of the regime of Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian War. Another disturbing event happened in early 2015 in the coastal city of Tripoli, when a similar attack took the lives of 9 people in an Alawi area. The al-Nusra Front (linked to al-Qaeda) took responsibility for the attack, targeting the Alawites as sympathisers to the Syrian regime. As concerns the border areas, towns such as Aarsal or Raas Baalbek were seriously affected by the hostilities. Hezbollah played a large role, fighting in the northeast border area and in areas like the Beqaa valley, an area where it had significant influence. The Lebanese military forces, however, were increasingly implicated in border clashes with armed Syrian groups and attempts to keep groups like ISIS from penetrating Lebanese territory.

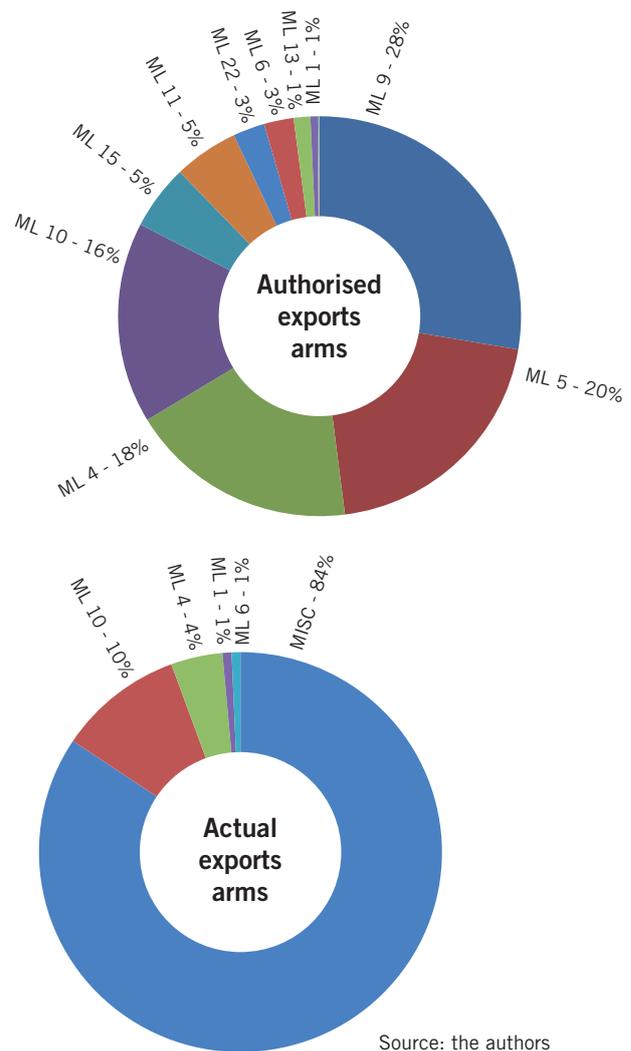
At the same time, there was news of violent events in the border areas with Israel. The incidents were specifically focused in early 2015 and at the end of the year, and the two periods combined represented the worse escalation of violence associated with this international dispute since the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. In January an Israeli airstrike in Syrian-controlled Golan Heights in the province of Quneitra ended with the deaths of six Hezbollah soldiers – including a supreme leader of the Shia group, and the son of another leader allegedly assassinated

13. See "Israel" in this same report.

by Israel in 2008 – as well as an Iranian general. Israeli sources assured that the group had been planning attacks against Israel. In response, the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah announced that retaliatory measures would be taken. The exchange of fire in the area near the border in the following days caused the deaths of three more people, two Israeli soldiers and a member of a UN mission in Lebanon, UNIFIL (established in 1978 and which has been overseeing the ceasefire between the two sides since 2006). The member of UNIFIL, of Spanish nationality, died as a result of Israeli fire in the Shebaa Farms area. Although during the rest of the year the incidents related to this dispute were sporadic – evidence that neither party to the conflict wanted an escalation that could lead to a direct sustained conflict like the armed conflict in Syria – at the end of 2015, a new episode intensified tensions. An attack in Damascus attributed to the Israeli air force caused the death of Samir Qantar, a supreme leader of Hezbollah, and another eight people. Israel neither confirmed nor denied responsibility for the attack on Qantar – who had spent 30 years in Israeli jails for the assassination of three Israelis and who had been freed in 2008 after an exchange of prisoners between Israel and Hezbollah – while the Shia group based in Lebanon promised to avenge his death.

Arms Exports

Lebanon is very close to the epicentres of two of the most contested conflicts in the Middle East: the Syrian Civil War and the Israeli-Palestinean conflict. With the war in neighbouring Syria, the lack of ability to police the border and the penetration of combatants into Lebanon has created a justification for the urgent acquisition of new weaponry, in some cases funded by Saudi Arabia and provided mostly by Italy and France. In 2015, Lebanon imported arms worth €10.5 million, while authorisations for exports to Lebanon rose to more than €1.55 billion, with the main category of imports being unknown, followed by military aircraft, explosive artefacts, and small arms. Aside from Italy and France, the main EU arms trade partners for this country were Romania and Bulgaria.



Source: the authors

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).

5. ANNEX II

DEFINITIONS

Conventional arms

Arms that are not biological, chemical or nuclear.

Heavy conventional arms

Weapons of large size that cannot be transported by one person or a group of people, for example, planes, ships, submarines, tanks, vehicles, artillery, cannons, machine guns, etc.

Small arms and light weapons¹

Small arms or handguns:

Small arms are broadly categorized as those weapons intended for use by individual members of armed or security forces. They include revolvers and automatic pistols; rifles and carbines; sub-machine guns; assault rifles; and light machine guns.

Light weapons:

Light weapons are broadly categorized as those weapons intended for use by several members of armed or security forces acting as a group. They include heavy machine guns; hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers; portable anti-aircraft guns; portable anti-tank guns; recoilless rifles; portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems; and mortars of calibres less than 100 mm

MATERIAL OF DEFENCE²

All EU member nations use the same classification of material destined for military use. Weaponry is classified into 23 distinct categories:

Category 1: Smooth-bore weapons with a calibre less than 20 mm

Rifles, carbines, revolvers, pistols, machine pistols, machine guns, silencers, special gun-mountings, clips, weapons sights and flash suppressers for arms

Category 2: Weaponry with a smooth-bored barrel and caliber equal to or greater than 20 mm

¹ This definition of small arms and light weapons is that commonly used by the OSCE; see the document on small arms and light weapons from 2000: <http://www.osce.org/fsc/20783>
² Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment

Guns, howitzers, cannon, mortars, anti-tank weapons, projectile launchers, military flame throwers, rifles, recoilless rifles, smooth-bore weapons and signature reduction devices, military smoke, gas and pyrotechnic projectors or generators, weapons sights.

Category 3: Ammunition and fuse setting devices

Ammunition for weapons specified by Cat. 1, 3 or 12. Fuse setting devices, anvils, bullet cups, cartridge links, rotating bands and munitions metal parts, safing and arming devices, fuses, sensors and initiation devices, power supplies, submunitions.

Category 4: Bombs, torpedoes, rockets, missiles

Bombs, torpedoes, grenades, smoke cans, rockets, mines, missiles, depth charges, demolition charges, pyrotechnic products, cartridges and simulators, smoke grenades, fire bombs, missile rocket nozzles and nose cones for re-entry vehicles.

Category 5: Systems for aiming and direction of fire

Weapon control panels, computer guidance systems for bombing, gun aiming devices, weapon control systems and data acquisition systems for surveillance, tracking, recognition and identification equipment.

Category 6: All terrain vehicles

Vehicles designed especially or modified for military use, cars or other military armed vehicles or equipment for laying mines, armoured vehicles, amphibious vehicles, bulletproof tires.

Category 7: Chemical agents and biological toxins

Biological agents and radioactive materials, nerve agents, blistering agents, tear gas, riot control agents.

Category 8: Volatile materials and related substances

Explosives, propellants, pyrotechnic products, combustibles and related substances, perchlorates, chlorides and cromides, oxides, chemical binders, additives and chemical precursors.

Category 9: Warships

Warships and surface or underwater vessels, navigation equipment, diesel motors designed specifically for submarines, electric motors designed specifically for submarines, underwater detection apparatus, anti-submarine nets and anti-torpedoes.

Category 10: Aircraft

Combat aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's), aircraft engines, fuel suppliers, pressurized breathing equipment, parachutes, and autopilot systems.

Category 11: Electronic equipment

Electronic countermeasure and counter-countermeasure systems, underwater acoustic material, data security equipment, encryption equipment, guiding, navigation and transmission equipment.

Category 12: Kinetic energy weapon systems

Kinetic energy weapon systems, facilities for testing and evaluating test models, propulsion systems, homing systems, guidance and derived propulsion systems for projectiles.

Category 13: Armoured equipment and constructions

Armoured plating, metallic and non-metallic construction materials, military helmets, clothing and protection pieces.

Category 14: Equipment for military training and simulation

Combat simulators for flight training, radar target training, anti-submarine warfare training, missile launch training, and equipment for image generation.

Category 15: Countermeasure and imaging equipment

Recorders and image processing equipment, cameras, photographic equipment, image intensification equipment, thermal imaging and infrared forming equipment, radar image sensor equipment.

Category 16: Forgings (metallurgy)

Forged products, casting molds, half finished products, specially designed for articles in cat 1, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, or 19.

Category 17: Miscellaneous equipment, materials and libraries

Autonomous subaquatic apparatus, robots, close and semi-closed circuit apparatus, ferries.

Category 18: Production equipment and components

Environmental test facilities, continuous nitrators, equipment and apparatus for centrifuge testing, screw extruders.

Category 19: Directed energy weapon systems

Lasers, radio frequency particle beams, particle accelerators.

Category 20: Cryogenic and superconducting equipment

Equipment specifically designed or configured to be installed in vehicles for military applications on land, sea, air and space; superconducting electrical equipment.

Category 21: Software

Modelling software, software for simulation and evaluation of military weapon systems or the simulation of military operations scenarios, communications, control and intelligence software.

Category 22: Technology

Technology for the development, production or use of controlled materials and substances.

OTHER MILITARY AND DEFENSE EQUIPMENT

a. Firearms defined in article 3 resolution 55/255 of the United Nations general assembly for which the protocol is approved against the illegal manufacture and trafficking of firearms, their parts, components and ammunition, that aren't included in Annex I.1, articles 1, 2 and 3 in relation to military goods.

b. telescopic/light or image intensifying scopes and sights for firearms.

c. Generating devices, projectors, smoke machines, gases, "riot control agents" or incapacitating substances.

d. Launchers of the elements described in the previous paragraph c.

e. Sound and light riot control stun devices.

f. Riot control vehicles with some of the following features:

1. Systems to produce electric shocks
2. Systems to dispense incapacitating substances
3. Systems to dispense riot control agents
4. Water canons

g. Normal restraints and handcuffs

DUAL PURPOSE MATERIALS¹

Dual purpose technology and products, classified by all EU countries into 10 categories:

¹ The categories of dual-purpose materials are covered in the (UE) decree 388/2012, from 19 April (in annex I); Regulations published in the Official Journal of the EU 16 May 2012.

9305.91.00. - Other, military weapons of heading 9301

9305.99.00. - Others

9306. - Bombs, grenades, torpedoes, mines, missiles, cartridges and other ammunition and projectiles and parts thereof, including buckshot, shot and cartridge wads

9306.21.00. - "Cartridges for shotguns and guns with smooth-bore barrels and parts thereof; pellets for airguns", cartridges

9306.29. - Others

9306.29.40. - Pods

9306.29.70. - Others

9306.30. - Other cartridges and parts

9306.30.10. - For revolvers and pistols under heading 9302 and for machine pistols in part 9301

9306.30.30. - For military weapons

9306.30.91. - Centrefire cartridges

9306.30.93. - Rimfire cartridges

9306.30.97. - Others

9306.90. - Others

9306.90.10. - Of War

9306.90.90. - Others

9307. - Sabres, swords, bayonets, lances and similar bladed weapons, their parts and casings.

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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