

An Uphill Battle

UNDERSTANDING SMALL ARMS TRANSFERS

This chapter provides an annual update of the authorized trade in small arms and light weapons. It examines trends in the trade, and provides information on major exporters and importers, their trading partners, and the types of weapons they trade.

The lack of transparency on the part of many important suppliers and recipients in this global trade makes this effort an uphill battle. In fact, although the issue of small arms and light weapons has been on the international agenda for more than a decade, few—if any—states provide full information on their small arms and light weapons exports and imports. The chapter contains the updated and revised Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer, introduced in *Small Arms Survey 2004*.

Following up on the analysis of the illicit trade in Europe in the *Small Arms Survey 2005*, this chapter provides more systematic information on the illicit trade in South America. The analysis is based on two sources of internationally comparable data partially available for the illicit trade, namely customs and police seizure data.

The main findings of the chapter include the following:

Small arms exports and imports

- According to available data and estimates, the top exporters of small arms and light weapons by value (exporting at least USD 100 million of small arms and light weapons, including parts and ammunition, annually) in 2003—the latest year for which data is available—were the Russian Federation, the United States, Italy, Germany, Brazil, and China. Compared to 2002 and 2001, the only change is that Belgium was no longer among the top exporters in 2003.
- The top importers (importing a value of at least USD 100 million) for 2003, according to customs data, were the United States, Cyprus, and Germany. Top importers tend to vary more than top exporters, but the United States and Cyprus were both on the list for 2001, 2002, and 2003.
- As in previous years, small arms ammunition transfers make up a large part of small arms and light weapons transfers as a whole.



With plans to purchase large numbers of guns from the Russian Federation, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez speaks to Russian President Vladimir Putin during a meeting in Moscow in November 2004. © Sergei Karpukhin/Reuters

Small arms trade transparency

- This chapter features the updated and slightly revised Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer, a tool for comparing states based on transparency. The new maximum score is 25, which includes four new or extended parameters: (a) the timeliness of reporting; (b) whether detailed weapon descriptions are provided (i.e. if there is a differentiation among subcategories of small arms and light weapons such as pistols/revolvers, sniper rifles, shotguns, machine guns, etc.); (c) whether information on small arms and light weapons ammunition is included; and (d) whether reporting covers both civilian and military small arms (maximum 2 points instead of the previous single point).
- The 2006 Barometer indicates that among the major exporters of small arms and light weapons, the most transparent are the United States and Germany. The least transparent are Bulgaria, Iran, Israel, and North Korea, all scoring zero.
- States seem particularly unwilling to provide any data on the intended end-users of small arms, government-sourced transactions (which often concern older weapons from state stockpiles), licence denials, and, albeit to a lesser extent, licence approvals. Timeliness of reporting also remains a serious problem in many cases.

International illicit small arms transfers: South America

- Customs data in South America has strong limitations in terms of systematization, organization, and comparability. Police data indicates that in this region diversion from military stockpiles from neighbouring countries is as serious a problem as international arms trafficking.
- The harmonization of domestic small arms control laws is crucial, as criminals use legal loopholes in neighbouring countries to purchase and smuggle small arms across national borders. This is particularly important in the case of small-calibre handguns. 🚫

E = Export report with year of reporting. C = Customs data.

Scoring system

(a) *Timeliness (2 points total, score based on national arms export reports data only)*: A report has been published within the last 24 months (up to 31 January 2006) (0.5 points); information is available in a timely fashion (1 point if within 6 months of the end of the year in question, 0.5 if within a year).

(b) *Access (2 points total)*: Information is: available on Internet through UN Comtrade (1 point); available in a UN language (0.5 points); free of charge (0.5 points).

(c) *Clarity (5 points total)*: The reporting includes source information (1 point); small arms and light weapons distinguishable from other types of weapons (1 point); small arms and light weapons ammunition distinguishable from other types of ammunition (1 point); detailed weapons description included (1 point); reporting includes information on types of end-users (military, police, other security forces, civilians, civilian retailers) (1 point).

(d) *Comprehensiveness (6 points total)*: The reporting covers: government-sourced as well as industry-sourced transactions (1 point); civilian and military small arms and light weapons (2 points); information on small arms and light weapons parts (1 point); information on small arms and light weapons ammunition (1 point); summaries of export laws and regulations, and international commitments (1 point).

(e) *Information on deliveries (4 points total)*: Data disaggregated by weapons type (value of weapons shipped [1 point], quantity of weapons shipped [1 point]), and by country and weapons type (value of weapons shipped [1 point], quantity of weapons shipped [1 point]).

(f) *Information on licences granted (4 points total)*: Data disaggregated by weapons type (value of weapons licensed [1 point], quantity of weapons licensed [1 point]), and by country and weapons type (value of weapons licensed [1 point], quantity of weapons licensed [1 point]).

(g) *Information on licences refused (2 points total)*: Data disaggregated by weapons type (value of licence refused [0.5 points], quantity of weapons under refused licence [0.5 points]), and by country and weapons type (value of licence refused [0.5 points], quantity of weapons under refused licence [0.5 points]).

Note 1: The Barometer is based on each country's most recent arms exports that were publicly available as of March 2006 and/or on 2003 customs data from UN Comtrade.

Note 2: Under (d), (e), and (f), no points are granted for number of shipments or number of licences granted or denied, as such figures give little information about the magnitude of the trade. The data is disaggregated by weapons type if the share of small arms and light weapons in the country's total arms trade is delineated (x per cent of the total value of the arms exports consisted of small arms and light weapons; x number of small arms and light weapons were exported in total). The data is disaggregated both by country and by weapons type if there is information on the types of weapons that are transferred to individual recipient states (x numbers/x USD worth of small arms was delivered to country y).

Note 3: Under (d), (e), and (f), 'weapons type' means broader weapons categories (that is, 'small arms' as opposed to 'armoured vehicles' or 'air-to-air missiles'), not specific weapons descriptions ('assault rifles' as opposed to 'hunting rifles').

Note 4: The fact that the Barometer is based on two sources—customs data (as reported to UN Comtrade) and national arms export reports—works to the advantage of states that publish data in both forms, since what they do not provide in one form of reporting they might provide in the other. Points achieved from each source of the two sources are added up. However, points are obviously not counted twice (e.g. if a country provides both customs data and export reports in a UN language, it gets 1 point for this under access, not more).

Note 5: The scores of the 2005 and 2006 Barometers are not comparable, due to changes in the scoring system between the two years.

1 Australia and Canada receive full score on deliveries, as they are among the few countries that provide information to UN Comtrade on numbers of small arms transferred in most categories (Australia: except parts/accessories of revolvers/pistols, shotgun barrels, and parts/accessories of sporting/hunting weapons; Canada: except parts/accessories of revolvers/pistols, shotgun barrels, parts/accessories of sporting/hunting weapons, and ammunition).

2 Belgium has not published any national arms export report since 2002 because export control was regionalized in September 2003 (for details, see Wallonia, 2004, pp. 3–12). This means that each Belgian region in principle reports separately on its arms exports, but so far practice in this respect has been sketchy at best (for further details, see Box 3.3). The score is therefore based on customs data submissions only.

3 China, Pakistan, and Singapore all receive full score on deliveries, as they are among the few countries that provide information to UN Comtrade on numbers of small arms transferred. This makes their total scores larger than would otherwise be warranted.

4 France receives full score on deliveries, although it should be stressed that deliveries of quantities (as opposed to values) are provided for a four-year period, rather than yearly (France, 2005, p. 67). France gives details of orders [*prises de commande*], which are defined as 'contracts signed and entered into force through a first down-payment during the year under consideration' (France, 2005, p. 54, authors' translation). Orders are not equivalent to licences, and therefore no points are given in the columns pertaining to licences granted and denied.

5 Germany provides more detailed information on licences granted and denied for main trading partners and so-called 'third countries', i.e. countries outside the circle of the EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and NATO-equivalent countries (Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and Switzerland). It has been awarded full points on the relevant criteria nevertheless.

Table 3.3 Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer 2006, covering major exporters

Country and source(s) available	Total points (25 points max.)	Timeliness (2 points max.)	Access (2 points max.)	Clarity (5 points max.)	Comprehensiveness (6 points max.)	Information on deliveries (4 points max.)	Information on licences granted (4 points max.)	Information on licences refused (2 points max.)
Australia ^a E (01-02) C	14.5	0.5	2	2.5	5.5	4	0	0
Austria C	9.5	0	1.5	2.5	3.5	2	0	0
Belgium ^c C	9	0	1.5	2.5	3	2	0	0
Brazil C	10	0	1.5	2.5	4	2	0	0
Bulgaria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada ^a E (02) C	16.5	0.5	2	4	6	4	0	0
China ^a C	10.5	0	1.5	2.5	2.5	4	0	0
Czech Republic E (04) C	16	1	2	3	5	3	2	0
Croatia C	10	0	1.5	2.5	4	2	0	0
Finland E (03) C	16	1	2	3	6	2	2	0
France ^a E (04) C	16.5	1	2	3.5	6	4	0	0
Germany ^a E (04) C	19	1	2	3.5	6	2	4	0.5
Iran	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Israel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy E (04) C	17	2	2	3	5	3	2	0
Japan C	11	0	1.5	2.5	5	2	0	0
Mexico C	9	0	1.5	2.5	3	2	0	0
North Korea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway E (04) C	15	2	2	3	6	2	0	0
Pakistan ^a C	11	0	1.5	2.5	3	4	0	0
Portugal E (03) C	11	0.5	2	2.5	4	2	0	0
Romania E (02)	4.5	0.5	0.5	1.5	1	1	0	0
Russian Federation C	7.5	0	1.5	2.5	1.5	2	0	0
Singapore ^a C	9.5	0	1.5	2.5	1.5	4	0	0
South Africa E (00-02)	1.5	0.5	1	0	0	0	0	0
South Korea C	10	0	1.5	2.5	4	2	0	0
Spain ^a E (04) C	16	1	2	3.5	6	2.5	1	0
Sweden E (04) C	15	2	2	3	6	2	0	0
Switzerland E (04) C	14	1.5	2	3	5	2	0	0.5
Turkey C	10.5	0	1.5	2.5	4.5	2	0	0
UK ^a E (04) C	15	2	2	3	6	2	0	0
US ^a E (04) C	20.5	2	2	3.5	5	4	4	0

⁶ Spain makes public its report on small arms and light weapons exports to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as an annex to its arms export report. The report contains information both on licences granted (volumes by country and weapons type) and on actual deliveries (also volumes by country and weapons type). It covers only the OSCE states, and hence a very limited number of transactions. Spain is hence granted only part of the points on licences and deliveries. Other states make their OSCE reports public, but separately from the arms export reports. These are therefore not taken into account in the Barometer.

⁷ The score takes into account the UK practice of reporting on export licences on a quarterly basis.

⁸ The United States receives full score on deliveries, as it is among the few countries that provide information to UN Comtrade on numbers of small arms transferred in all categories except parts/accessories of revolvers/pistols, parts/accessories of sporting/hunting weapons, and sometimes small arms ammunition.