

TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS, 2024

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Imports of major arms by states in Europe increased by 155 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24.¹ However, there was almost no change in the global volume of arms transfers between the two periods (–0.6 per cent) because increases in arms transfers to Europe and the Americas were offset by overall decreases in transfers to all other regions (see figure 1).

Ukraine was the world’s largest importer of major arms in 2020–24, as its imports increased nearly 100 times over (+9627 per cent) compared with 2015–19. It was the only European state among the world’s top 10 arms importers in 2020–24. The United States was by far the largest exporter of major arms in 2020–24 with a share of 43 per cent of global arms exports. Russia’s arms exports decreased by 64 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24, making it the world’s third largest arms exporter behind the USA and France.

From 10 March 2025 the freely available SIPRI Arms Transfers Database includes updated data on transfers of major arms for 1950–2024. Based on the new data, this fact sheet presents global trends in arms exports and arms imports, and highlights selected issues related to transfers of major arms.

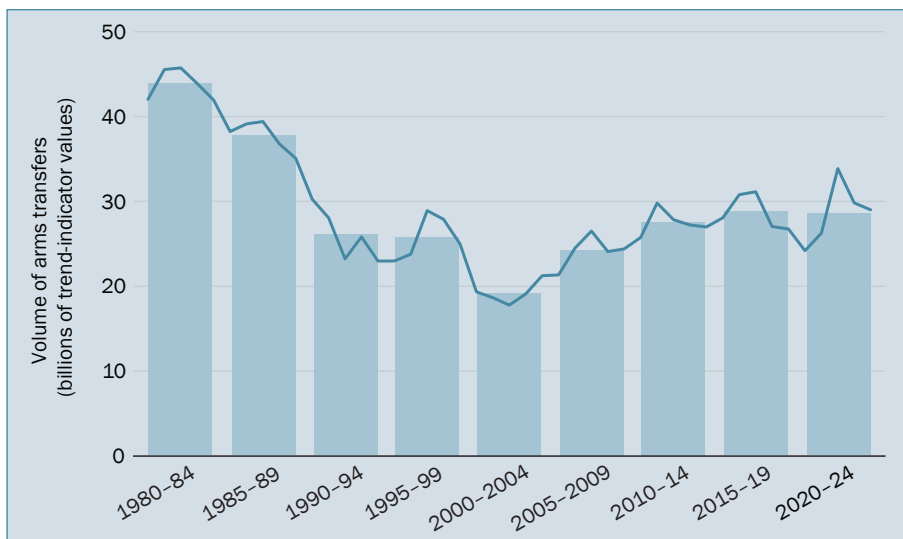


Figure 1. The trend in international transfers of major arms, 1980–2024

Note: The bar graph shows the average annual volume of arms transfers for 5-year periods and the line graph shows the annual totals. The SIPRI trend-indicator value (TIV) is a measure of the volume of international transfers of major arms. The method used for the SIPRI TIV is described on the Arms Transfers Database web page.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2025.

¹ In this fact sheet the terms ‘arms exports’ and ‘arms imports’ are used to refer to international transfers of major arms, as defined by SIPRI.

KEY FACTS

- The volume of international transfers of major arms in 2020–24 was 0.6 per cent lower than in 2015–19.
- The five largest arms exporters in 2020–24 were the United States, France, Russia, China and Germany.
- Arms exports by the USA went up by 21 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24, while those by Russia went down by 64 per cent. France’s arms exports increased by 11 per cent.
- The five largest arms importers in 2020–24 were Ukraine, India, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.
- States in Asia and Oceania accounted for 33 per cent of all arms imports in 2020–24, followed by those in Europe (28 per cent), the Middle East (27 per cent), the Americas (6.2 per cent) and Africa (4.5 per cent).
- Ukraine was the world’s biggest arms importer in 2020–24, accounting for 8.8 per cent of global imports, as states supplied arms, mostly as aid, in response to the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022.
- The USA accounted for 64 per cent of arms imports by European NATO states in 2020–24, which was a substantially larger share than in 2015–19 (52 per cent).
- Russian arms imports from North Korea in 2020–24 were in violation of a United Nations arms embargo on the supplier state.

Table 1. The 25 largest exporters of major arms and their main recipients, 2020–24

Percentages below 10 are rounded to 1 decimal place; percentages over 10 are rounded to whole numbers.

Rank	Exporter	Share of global arms exports (%)		Per cent change from 2015–19 to 2020–24 ^a	Main recipients and their share of exporter's total exports (%), 2020–24					
		2020–24	2015–19		1st	2nd	3rd			
1	United States	43	35	21	Saudi Arabia	12	Ukraine	9.3	Japan	8.8
2	France	9.6	8.6	11	India	28	Qatar	9.7	Greece	8.3
3	Russia	7.8	21	-64	India	38	China	17	Kazakhstan	11
4	China	5.9	6.2	-5.4	Pakistan	63	Serbia	6.8	Thailand	4.6
5	Germany	5.6	5.7	-2.6	Ukraine	19	Egypt	19	Israel	11
6	Italy	4.8	2.0	138	Qatar	28	Egypt	18	Kuwait	18
7	United Kingdom	3.6	3.6	-1.4	Qatar	28	USA	16	Ukraine	10
8	Israel	3.1	3.2	-2.0	India	34	USA	13	Philippines	8.1
9	Spain	3.0	2.3	29	Saudi Arabia	24	Australia	18	Türkiye	13
10	South Korea	2.2	2.1	4.9	Poland	46	Philippines	14	India	7.0
11	Türkiye	1.7	0.8	103	UAE	18	Pakistan	10	Qatar	9.9
12	Netherlands	1.2	1.9	-36	USA	23	Pakistan	20	Mexico	12
13	Poland	1.0	<0.05	4 031	Ukraine	96	Sweden	1.4	Estonia	0.9
14	Sweden	0.9	0.5	73	Brazil	22	Pakistan	18	UAE	15
15	Norway	0.8	0.3	187	USA	28	Ukraine	21	Romania	15
16	Canada	0.6	0.6	2.6	Ukraine	30	Saudi Arabia	27	UAE	18
17	Australia	0.5	0.3	54	Chile	32	Canada	30	USA	12
18	Iran	0.4	0.1	749	Russia	80	Venezuela	11	Houthi rebels ^b	7.1
19	Switzerland	0.4	0.9	-61	Spain	24	Denmark	18	Romania	18
20	Ukraine	0.3	1.1	-72	China	67	India	15	Pakistan	5.3
21	UAE	0.3	0.4	-23	Jordan	28	Canada	20	Egypt	16
22	Czechia	0.3	0.4	-14	Ukraine	78	Viet Nam	9.5	Indonesia	6.1
23	Jordan	0.3	0.2	92	Ukraine	51	USA	43	Austria	2.0
24	Brazil	0.3	0.2	27	Portugal	25	France	22	Hungary	13
25	South Africa	0.3	0.3	-11	UAE	29	USA	21	India	11

UAE = United Arab Emirates.

^a Figures show the change in volume of the total arms exports per exporter between the two periods.

^b These exports went to the Houthi non-state armed group based in Yemen.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2025.

THE EXPORTERS, 2020–24

SIPRI has identified 64 states as exporters of major arms in 2020–24. The five largest exporters of arms during that period—the USA, France, Russia, China and Germany—accounted for just under three quarters (72 per cent) of all arms exports (see figure 2 and table 1). US and French arms exports rose between 2015–19 and 2020–24, while Russian, Chinese and German arms exports fell (see figure 3). The USA and states in Western Europe together accounted for 73 per cent of all arms exports in 2020–24, compared with 61 per cent in 2015–19.

The United States

The USA's arms exports grew by 21 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24, and its share of global arms exports went from 35 per cent to 43 per cent,



which was almost as much as the next eight largest exporters combined. The USA supplied major arms to 107 states in 2020–24.

US arms exports to European states more than trebled (+233 per cent) between 2015–19 and 2020–24. For the first time in two decades (i.e. since 2000–2004), the largest share of US arms exports went to Europe, having increased from 13 per cent in 2015–19 to 35 per cent in 2020–24. Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Norway were among the top 10 largest recipients of US arms exports in 2020–24. Ukraine accounted for 9.3 per cent of all US arms exports and 26 per cent of those to Europe in the period. US arms exports to Ukraine in 2020–24 were mostly in the form of aid, with the majority of the transfers (71 per cent) being second-hand arms taken from stocks to ensure quick delivery.

States in the Middle East received the second largest share of US arms exports in 2020–24 (33 per cent). This was a much smaller share than in 2015–19 (49 per cent) as US arms exports to states in the region decreased by 17 per cent between the two periods. Saudi Arabia received 12 per cent of US arms transfers, making it the largest recipient of US arms exports in 2020–24. Qatar (accounting for 7.7 per cent of total US arms exports) and Kuwait (4.4 per cent) were also among the USA's top 10 recipients. Israel was the 11th largest recipient of US arms exports in 2020–24 with a share of 3.0 per cent.

States in Asia and Oceania received 28 per cent of US arms exports in 2020–24. The USA's arms transfers to Asia and Oceania are heavily influenced by its view, shared with many of its recipients in the region, of a growing threat from China. Three states in the region were among the 10 largest recipients

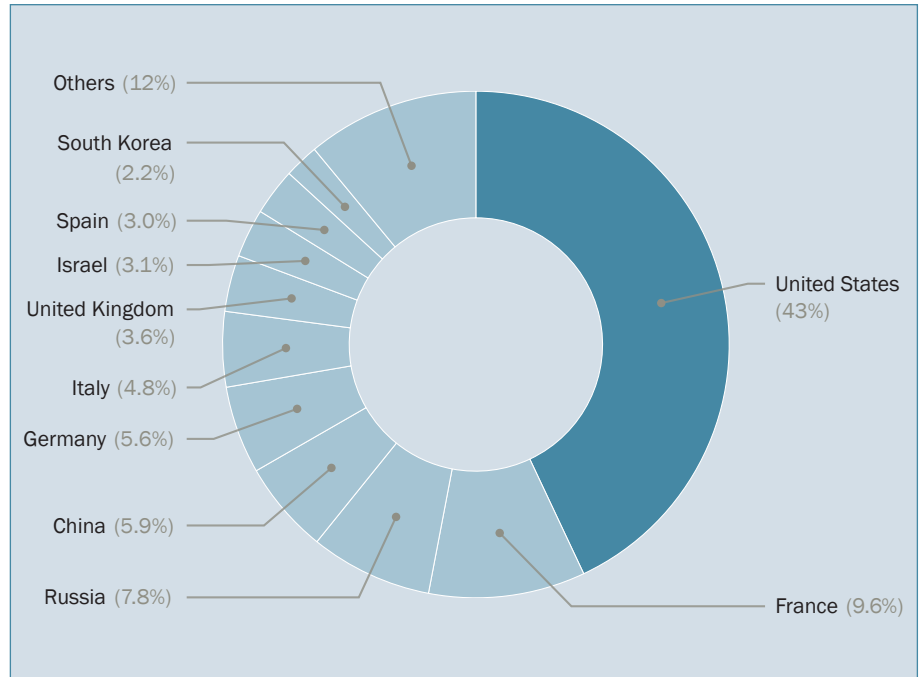


Figure 2. Global share of exports of major arms by the 10 largest exporters, 2020–24

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2025.

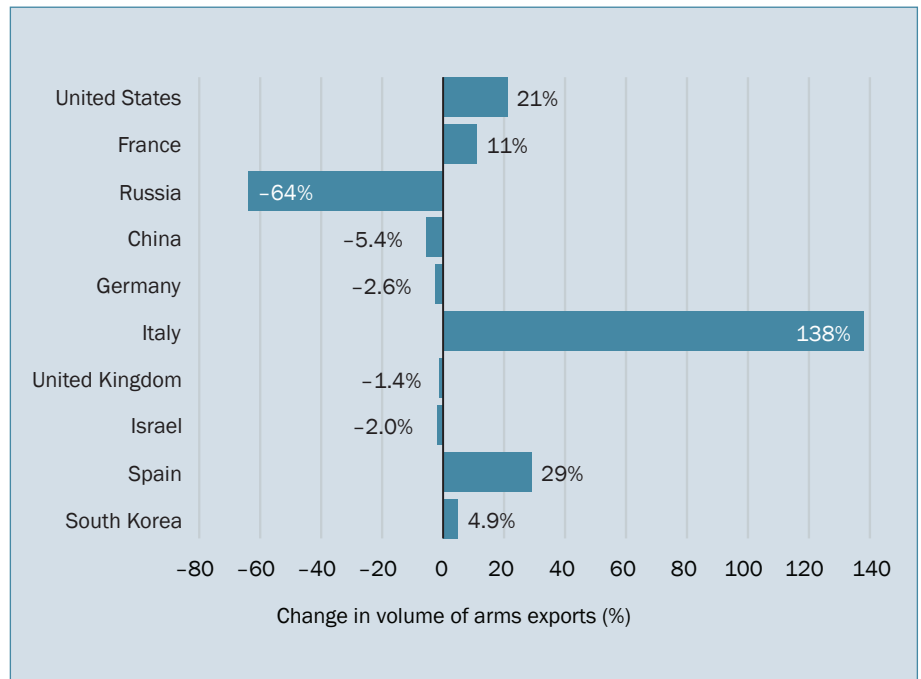


Figure 3. Changes in volume of exports of major arms since 2015–19 by the 10 largest exporters in 2020–24

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2025.

Box 1. Selected major arms on order or preselected for future orders from the 10 largest arms exporters, for delivery after 2024

It is very difficult to make predictions about future trends in arms transfers. Nevertheless, data on orders and final negotiations of orders can give a rough indication of which states will be among the largest exporters in coming years. The data on combat aircraft and major warships, which have a notably high military value, is particularly telling. As the table below shows, the United States will continue to be by far the largest exporter of major arms beyond 2024. What the future holds for other top suppliers is less certain, but France, the second largest arms exporter in 2020–24, also has relatively high numbers of pending deliveries of combat aircraft and major warships compared with most other suppliers.

	United States	France	Russia	China	Germany	Italy	United Kingdom	Israel	Spain	South Korea
Combat aircraft ^a	996	214	71	57	–	50	14	–	–	140
Combat helicopters	342	3	13	–	–	26	–	–	–	–
Major warships ^b	7	22	4	10	26	8	29	–	3	4
SAM systems ^c	41	–	55+	–	33+	–	2	31+	–	26
Tanks and fire-support vehicles	403	–	454	500	416	96	–	19	–	916
Other armoured vehicles	1 706+	537	–	2+	1 404+	1 865	–	124+	517	626+
Artillery	678+	251	–	128+	72+	–	–	51+	–	1 203+

– nil; SAM = surface-to-air missile.

^a Combat aircraft here include combat/trainer aircraft and anti-submarine warfare aircraft.

^b Major warships here include aircraft carriers, corvettes, destroyers, frigates and submarines.

^c SAM systems here include only land-based systems.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2025.

of US arms in 2020–24: Japan (accounting for 8.8 per cent of total US arms exports), Australia (6.7 per cent) and South Korea (5.3 per cent). Taiwan was the 18th largest recipient with a 1.5 per cent share.

The USA continues to be the main supplier of advanced long-range strike capabilities to many parts of the world. For example, in 2020–24, it supplied 45 per cent of all exports of long-range land-attack missiles (i.e. those with a range greater than 250 kilometres), delivering them to seven states. It has pending long-range missile deliveries to 13 states.

France

France was the second largest exporter of major arms in 2020–24. French arms exports accounted for 9.6 per cent of global arms transfers in this period, having increased by 11 per cent from 2015–19 and by 72 per cent from 2010–14. France delivered major arms to 65 states in 2020–24, with most of them going to states in Asia and Oceania (35 per cent), followed by those in the Middle East (28 per cent) and Europe (15 per cent). France's arms exports to European states almost trebled between 2015–19 and 2020–24 (+187 per cent), largely due to deliveries of combat aircraft to Greece and Croatia, and of various arms—including artillery, missiles and ships—to Ukraine after the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022.

In 2020–24 by far the biggest share of French arms exports went to India (28 per cent), which was almost twice the share that went to European recipient states combined (15 per cent). Qatar was the second largest recipient with 9.7 per cent of total French arms exports. France has many pending arms export deliveries (see box 1).



Russia

Arms exports by Russia dropped by 64 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24. Russia accounted for 7.8 per cent of global arms exports in 2020–24. The decline in Russia's arms exports started before its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In 2020 and 2021 export volumes were much smaller (ranging from 22 to 73 per cent lower) than in any year of the preceding two decades (i.e. 2000–19). This was largely as a result of a decrease in orders from China and India (see the importer section below). In 2024 the volume of Russian arms exports remained at around the same level as in 2023, which was 47 per cent lower than in 2022. The decrease since 2022 is likely mostly related to Russia's decision to prioritize the production of major arms for its own armed forces over those for export, the effects of multilateral trade sanctions imposed on Russia and increased pressure from the USA and its allies on states to avoid buying Russian arms.

Russia delivered major arms to 33 states in 2020–24. A total of 74 per cent of Russian arms exports went to states in Asia and Oceania, 12 per cent to those in Africa, 7.4 per cent to Europe (Armenia, Belarus and Serbia) and 6.4 per cent to the Middle East. Two thirds of Russian arms exports went to three states in 2020–24: India (38 per cent), China (17 per cent) and Kazakhstan (11 per cent).

Russia's pending export deliveries are at a low level compared with those of the USA; they are also well below those of France and South Korea for several categories of arms (see box 1). The most notable pending Russian deliveries are under deals with India, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Other major exporters

China accounted for 5.9 per cent of global arms exports in 2020–24, which was a slightly lower share than in 2015–19. While China is looking to increase its arms exports globally, many of the world's largest importers still choose not to buy major arms from China for political reasons. The bulk of Chinese arms exports (77 per cent) went to states in Asia and Oceania, followed by those in Africa (14 per cent). China delivered major arms to 44 states in 2020–24, but almost two thirds of its arms exports (63 per cent) went to just one state: Pakistan.

Arms exports by Germany made up 5.6 per cent of global arms exports in 2020–24 and were 2.6 per cent lower than in 2015–19. States in the Middle East received the largest share of German arms exports in 2020–24 (37 per cent), followed by those in Europe (34 per cent) and Asia and Oceania (21 per cent). Three states accounted for almost half of all German arms exports: Ukraine (19 per cent), Egypt (19 per cent) and Israel (11 per cent).

Italy's arms exports were 138 per cent higher in 2020–24 than in 2015–19, giving it a 4.8 per cent share of global arms exports. The biggest share of Italian arms exports (71 per cent) went to states in the Middle East.

Among the other exporters in the top 10, arms exports by the UK (–1.4 per cent) and Israel (–2.0 per cent) remained relatively stable. Both Spain (+29 per cent) and South Korea (+4.9 per cent) increased their arms exports between the two periods.

Table 2. The 40 largest importers of major arms and their main suppliers, 2020–24

Percentages below 10 are rounded to 1 decimal place; percentages over 10 are rounded to whole numbers.

Rank	Importer	Share of global arms imports (%)		Per cent change from 2015–19 to 2020–24 ^a	Main suppliers and their share of importer's total imports (%), 2020–24					
		2020–24	2015–19		1st	2nd	3rd			
1	Ukraine	8.8	0.1	9 627	USA	45	Germany	12	Poland	11
2	India	8.3	9.1	-9.3	Russia	36	France	33	Israel	13
3	Qatar	6.8	3.0	127	USA	48	Italy	20	UK	15
4	Saudi Arabia	6.8	11	-41	USA	74	Spain	10	France	6.2
5	Pakistan	4.6	2.8	61	China	81	Netherlands	5.5	Türkiye	3.8
6	Japan	3.9	2.0	93	USA	97	UK	2.0	Germany	0.5
7	Australia	3.5	4.8	-27	USA	81	Spain	15	Norway	1.3
8	Egypt	3.3	5.8	-44	Germany	32	Italy	27	France	19
9	United States	3.1	1.9	67	UK	18	France	15	Israel	13
10	Kuwait	2.9	0.5	466	USA	63	Italy	29	France	7.1
11	UAE	2.6	3.3	-19	USA	42	France	17	Türkiye	11
12	South Korea	2.6	3.4	-24	USA	86	Germany	9.7	UK	2.6
13	United Kingdom	2.5	1.8	36	USA	86	Israel	6.9	Spain	3.3
14	Poland	2.4	0.4	508	USA	45	South Korea	42	Italy	3.5
15	Israel	1.9	1.9	-2.3	USA	66	Germany	33	Italy	1.0
16	China	1.8	5.1	-64	Russia	72	France	13	Ukraine	12
17	Netherlands	1.8	0.6	220	USA	97	Italy	0.7	Finland	0.6
18	Norway	1.5	1.1	42	USA	91	South Korea	4.2	Italy	2.4
19	Greece	1.3	0.8	48	France	64	USA	19	UK	7.5
20	Singapore	1.2	1.5	-23	Germany	40	USA	32	France	14
21	Algeria	1.2	4.5	-73	Russia	48	China	19	Germany	14
22	Türkiye	1.1	1.7	-33	Spain	34	Italy	24	Germany	19
23	Bahrain	1.1	0.1	898	USA	97	Türkiye	1.4	UK	0.9
24	Italy	1.1	1.5	-27	USA	94	Germany	2.0	UK	1.5
25	Brazil	1.0	0.6	77	France	53	Sweden	20	Italy	11
26	Kazakhstan	0.9	1.0	-6.2	Russia	88	Spain	6.4	Türkiye	1.5
27	Philippines	0.9	0.6	53	South Korea	33	Israel	27	USA	20
28	Indonesia	0.9	1.7	-47	USA	33	France	15	South Korea	12
29	Denmark	0.9	0.2	311	USA	79	Switzerland	7.6	Germany	7.2
30	Romania	0.8	0.2	233	USA	61	Norway	15	Switzerland	8.4
31	Morocco	0.7	1.0	-26	USA	64	France	15	Israel	11
32	NATO ^b	0.7	0.1	729	France	74	UK	17	USA	9.9
33	Germany	0.7	0.2	334	USA	70	Israel	13	Sweden	5.1
34	Belgium	0.7	0.1	1 338	Spain	49	USA	43	Germany	8.1
35	Canada	0.7	1.0	-26	Spain	30	USA	26	Australia	22
36	Serbia	0.7	0.1	465	China	57	Russia	20	France	7.4
37	Hungary	0.7	<0.05	1 454	Germany	51	USA	17	Norway	11
38	New Zealand	0.7	0.1	879	USA	76	South Korea	10	UK	9.1
39	Taiwan	0.6	0.9	-27	USA	98	Italy	1.2	Germany	1.0
40	Thailand	0.6	1.2	-49	China	43	USA	14	South Korea	12

NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization; UAE = United Arab Emirates.

^a Figures show the change in volume of the total arms imports per importer between the two periods.^b The data is for imports by the organization itself, not the total imports by NATO member states.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2025.



THE IMPORTERS, 2020–24

SIPRI has identified 162 states as importers of major arms in 2020–24. The top five arms importers—Ukraine, India, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan—received 35 per cent of global arms imports in the period (see figure 4 and table 2). States in Asia and Oceania accounted for 33 per cent of all arms imports in 2020–24 (see figure 5), followed by those in Europe (28 per cent), the Middle East (27 per cent), the Americas (6.2 per cent) and Africa (4.5 per cent).

Africa

Imports of major arms by African states fell by 44 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24, which was mainly due to decreases in the arms imports of the two largest importers in the region: Algeria (–73 per cent) and Morocco (–26 per cent). Algeria's arms imports dropped in 2020–24 after reaching a peak in 2015–19. Between 2005–2009 and 2010–14, Morocco's arms imports increased by more than 10 times (+1164 per cent), but they have decreased in each period since then. Based on its pending deliveries, Morocco's arms imports are expected to increase in the coming years.

The main suppliers to Africa in 2020–24 were Russia (accounting for 21 per cent of African imports of major arms), China (18 per cent) and the USA (16 per cent).

Sub-Saharan Africa

States in sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 2.2 per cent of global imports of major arms in 2020–24. Their combined arms imports were 4.2 per cent higher than in 2015–19 but 42 per cent lower than in 2010–14.

While imports of major arms by states in sub-Saharan Africa have remained at a relatively low level overall, imports by states in West Africa have risen sharply over the past 15 years as the security situation in many of those states has deteriorated.² In 2020–24 arms imports by West African states were 100 per cent higher than in 2015–19 and 82 per cent higher than in 2010–14. The sharp rise over these periods was primarily due to big increases in arms imports by Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. Nigeria was by far the largest arms importer among West African

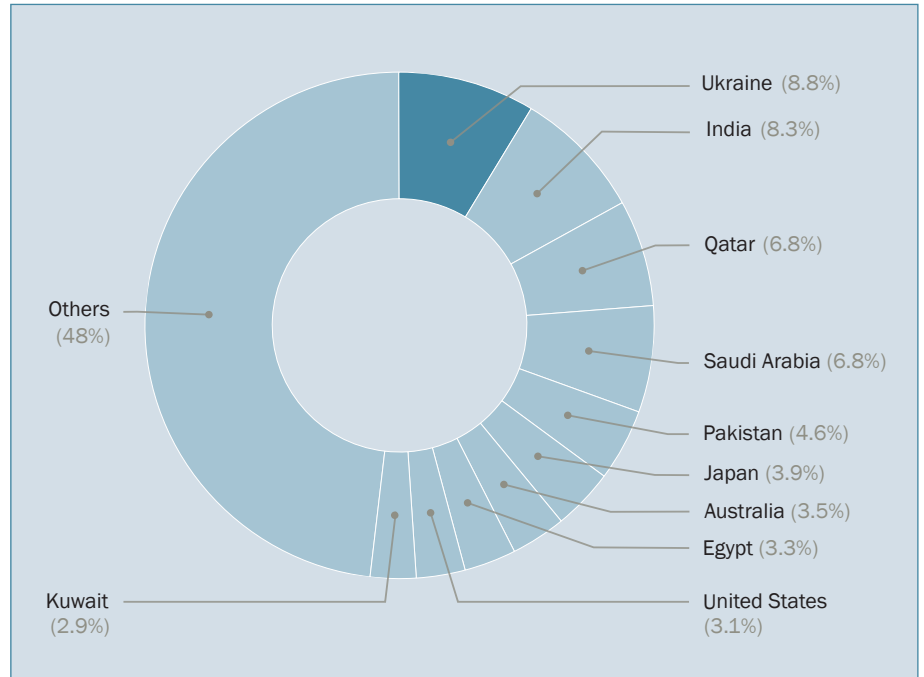


Figure 4. Global share of imports of major arms by the 10 largest importers, 2020–24

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2025.

² The West African states covered by this analysis are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

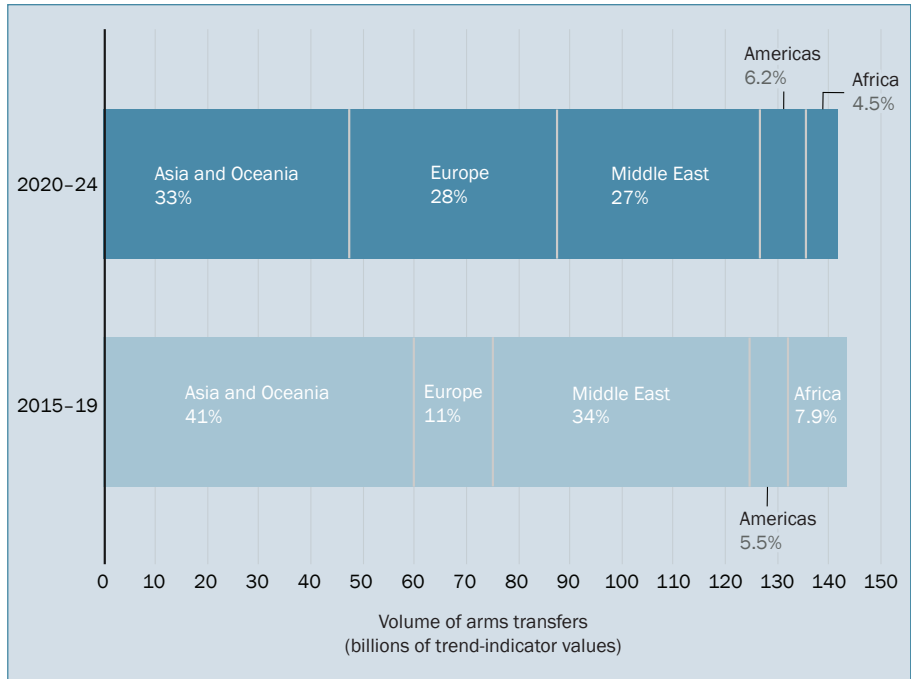


Figure 5. The importers of major arms, by region, 2020–24 and 2015–19, per cent of global share

Note: The SIPRI trend-indicator value (TIV) is a measure of the volume of international transfers of major arms. The method used for the SIPRI TIV is described on the Arms Transfers Database web page.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2025.

states, accounting for 34 per cent of all imports of major arms to West Africa in 2020–24.

Many arms suppliers, including emerging suppliers such as Türkiye, are using arms exports to boost their influence in this part of the world. The biggest supplier to states in West Africa in 2020–24 was China, which accounted for 26 per cent of West African arms imports, followed by France (14 per cent) and Russia and Türkiye (each accounting for 11 per cent). While the USA supplied only 4.6 per cent of imports of major arms by West African states in 2020–24, it had the highest number of recipients (10) among suppliers to West Africa. China, France and Türkiye supplied major arms to nine states each; Russia supplied four states. Senegal accounted for 79 per cent of total West African imports of major arms from France, while Mali accounted for 54 per cent of

those from Russia. Less than 5.0 per cent of West African arms imports were in the form of aid in 2020–24. Of this aid, most came from the USA, which donated arms to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger before the coups and foreign policy changes in these states that took place during the period.

The Americas

Arms imports by states in the Americas increased by 13 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24. The USA (accounting for 50 per cent of the regional total), Brazil (17 per cent) and Canada (11 per cent) were the top three importers of major arms in the region in 2020–24.

Arms imports by states in South America rose by 15 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24. Brazil’s arms imports increased by 77 per cent and accounted for 49 per cent of the subregional total in 2020–24. The main suppliers to South America in 2020–24 were France (accounting for 30 per cent of subregional imports), the USA (12 per cent) and the UK (11 per cent). Russia did not deliver any major arms to South America in the period.

Asia and Oceania

Arms imports by states in Asia and Oceania dropped by 21 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24, mainly because of a sharp decrease in Chinese arms imports. Nevertheless, Asia and Oceania remained the region with the highest volume of arms imports, accounting for 33 per cent of the global total



in 2020–24. Four of the world’s 10 largest arms importers in the period were in Asia and Oceania: India, Pakistan, Japan and Australia. The main suppliers to the region were the USA (accounting for 37 per cent of regional arms imports), Russia (17 per cent) and China (14 per cent).

India and Pakistan

India’s tensions with China and Pakistan largely drive its arms imports. India was the world’s second largest arms importer in 2020–24 with an 8.3 per cent share of global imports. Indian arms imports decreased by 9.3 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24. The drop was at least partly the result of India’s increasing ability to design and produce its own weapons, making it less reliant on imports. The largest share of India’s imports came from Russia (36 per cent); however, this was a significantly smaller share than in 2015–19 (55 per cent) and 2010–14 (72 per cent). India is shifting its arms-supply relations towards Western suppliers, most notably France, Israel and the USA. Despite recent public declarations from the two sides that relations between India and Russia remain friendly, the shift is also visible in India’s new and planned orders for major arms, most of which will come from Western suppliers.

Pakistan’s arms imports increased by 61 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24 as it started to receive deliveries—including of combat aircraft and frigates—under a large-scale arms procurement programme. Pakistan accounted for 4.6 per cent of global arms imports in 2020–24, making it the world’s fifth largest arms importer. China has supplied the largest share of Pakistan’s major arms imports in all five-year periods since 1990–94 and this share has continued to grow: China supplied 81 per cent of Pakistan’s arms imports in 2020–24, compared with 74 per cent in 2015–19.

East Asia, Oceania and South East Asia

Arms imports by states in East Asia (–22 per cent), Oceania (–13 per cent) and South East Asia (–45 per cent) decreased between 2015–19 and 2020–24.

China’s arms imports fell by 64 per cent and accounted for 1.8 per cent of the global total in 2020–24, compared with 5.1 per cent in 2015–19. China was not among the world’s top 10 arms importers for the first time since 1990–94. China’s increasing ability to design and produce its own major arms means that it is far less reliant on arms imports than it was previously. Its arms imports will probably decrease further as the capacity of its domestic arms industry grows.

Japan and South Korea are expanding their military capabilities in a move that is largely driven by tensions with China and North Korea. Arms imports by Japan increased by 93 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24, while those by South Korea decreased by 24 per cent. The USA was the main supplier to both states in 2020–24, accounting for 97 per cent of Japanese and 86 per cent of South Korean arms imports. Based on their known pending deliveries, both Japan and South Korea will remain among the world’s top arms importers and will probably increase their imports in the coming years.

Taiwan’s arms imports decreased by 27 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24 despite a significant increase in tensions with China. Planned deliveries of major arms to Taiwan over the next five years, almost all of which will come from the USA, are relatively limited in scale compared with China’s

ongoing military build-up or the volumes of arms being imported by other major US allies in Asia, such as Japan and South Korea.

Australia went from fifth largest arms importer globally in 2015–19 to seventh largest in 2020–24 as its arms imports dropped by 27 per cent. Australia placed several new major orders during 2020–24, including for six nuclear-powered submarines from the UK and the USA.

Arms imports by South East Asian states fell by 45 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24. Of the larger states in South East Asia, only the Philippines increased its arms imports (+53 per cent). However, in response to growing tensions with China, most of the other large states in the subregion have ordered or plan to order combat aircraft and ships.

Europe

Imports of major arms by European states were 155 per cent higher in 2020–24 than in 2015–19. Ukraine received 8.8 per cent of global arms imports in 2020–24, making it the largest arms importer in Europe and the world. The UK (with a 2.5 per cent share of global arms imports) and Poland (2.4 per cent) were the next biggest European arms importers. The USA accounted for 53 per cent of European arms imports in 2020–24, compared with 41 per cent in 2015–19. The next biggest suppliers to the region were Germany (accounting for 6.8 per cent) and France (5.3 per cent).

Arms imports and the war in Ukraine

Since the Russian invasion in February 2022, at least 35 states have supplied major arms to Ukraine, in most cases as aid. While Ukraine imported very few major arms before 2022, it was by far the biggest arms importer globally in the years 2023 and 2024, making it the world's largest importer for the period 2020–24. Most of the major arms transferred to Ukraine came from the USA (45 per cent), followed by Germany (12 per cent) and Poland (11 per cent). In 2024 Ukraine's ability to strike at longer range was increased as several states supplied long-range missiles and aircraft, and some allowed Ukraine to use those weapons to attack targets on Russian territory. For example, France, the UK and the USA supplied missiles with a range of 300 km, while Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway delivered combat aircraft and Belgium and France prepared to do so.

Russia accounted for 0.5 per cent of global arms imports in 2020–24. Historically, Russia has mostly relied on domestic production to meet its demand for major arms. In 2020–24 it imported missiles with a range of 100 km and one-way attack drones from Iran as well as artillery and missiles with a range of 450 km from North Korea. The imports from North Korea were in violation of a United Nations arms embargo on the supplier state.

Arms imports by European NATO states

Russia's earlier invasion of Ukraine in 2014 boosted demand for arms among European member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Taken together, their arms imports more than doubled between 2015–19 and 2020–24 (+105 per cent). At around the same time (2017–21), transatlantic relations came under strain during the first administration of US President Donald J. Trump; this strain increased during 2024 in the run-up



to the second Trump administration. As a result, there have been calls from European NATO states to take steps to reduce their dependence on arms imports and to strengthen the arms industry in Europe. Nevertheless, the USA accounted for 64 per cent of arms imports by European NATO states in 2020–24, which was a substantially larger share than in 2015–19 (52 per cent). The next four biggest suppliers to European NATO states were France and South Korea (accounting for 6.5 per cent each), Germany (4.7 per cent) and Israel (3.9 per cent).

The deeply rooted arms-supply relationship between the USA and European NATO states is also visible in the large number of pending deliveries to those states from the USA. These include a total of 472 combat aircraft and 150 combat helicopters on order with the USA as of the end of 2024.

The Middle East

Arms imports by states in the Middle East were 20 per cent lower in 2020–24 than in 2015–19. Four of the world's top 10 arms importers in 2020–24 were in the Middle East: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Kuwait. More than half of Middle Eastern arms imports came from the USA (52 per cent). The next largest suppliers to the Middle East were Italy (accounting for 13 per cent of regional arms imports), France (9.8 per cent) and Germany (7.6 per cent).

Israel, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis

In 2024 warfare continued between Israel (on one side) and Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis (on the other), with each of these actors having a different level of reliance on, or access to, imported major arms.

Between 2015–19 and 2020–24, arms imports by Israel remained largely stable (–2.3 per cent). Israel was the 15th largest arms importer globally in 2020–24, down from 14th in 2015–19. The USA was the biggest supplier of major arms to Israel in 2020–24 (accounting for 66 per cent of Israeli arms imports), followed by Germany (33 per cent). Israeli imports from the USA included combat aircraft, armoured vehicles and guided bombs, while the main imports from Germany were frigates and torpedoes.

Israel has used a range of imported major arms in its military actions in Gaza, Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen that were launched in response to the Hamas-led attack on 7 October 2023. Most of these arms—including combat aircraft supplied as aid by the USA over several decades—were delivered before October 2023. Towards the end of 2023, the USA ramped up its supplies of aid to Israel and delivered armoured vehicles, guided bombs and missiles during 2024. By the end of 2024, Israel had pending deliveries of more major arms, including 61 combat aircraft from the USA, 50 of which were ordered in 2024.

Iran's arms imports have been at a very low level relative to those of most other arms importers in the Middle East since around 1993. Iran's only supplier of major arms in 2020–24 was Russia. Iran received a total of 6 light combat aircraft from Russia in 2023 and 2024 and has pending deliveries for 42 combat aircraft.

Owing to a lack of verifiable information, it is difficult to make a detailed assessment of the transfers of major arms to Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis in 2020–24. However, Iran is known to have supplied anti-tank

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missiles to Hezbollah and anti-ship missiles, surface-to-surface missiles and one-way attack drones to the Houthis during the period.

Qatar and Saudi Arabia

Against the backdrop of tensions with its neighbours, Qatar was the 3rd largest arms importer globally in 2020–24, having been the 10th largest in 2015–19. Qatari arms imports in 2020–24 were 127 per cent higher than in 2015–19 and 1312 per cent higher than in 2010–14. Qatar's main supplier in 2020–24 was the USA (accounting for 48 per cent of Qatari arms imports), followed by Italy (20 per cent), the UK (15 per cent) and France (14 per cent). In 2020–24 Qatar's imports included 42 combat aircraft from the USA, 31 from the UK and 16 from France; it also imported 7 major warships from Italy.

Arms imports by Saudi Arabia decreased by 41 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24. It went from being the world's largest arms importer in 2015–19 to fourth largest in 2020–24. Saudi Arabia's main supplier in 2020–24 was the USA (accounting for 74 per cent of Saudi Arabian arms imports), followed by Spain (10 per cent) and France (6.2 per cent). The decrease in Saudi Arabia's arms imports in 2020–24 can be partly attributed to the cyclical nature of arms procurement. Based on known pending deliveries, Saudi Arabia is expected to remain a major importer of arms in the coming years.

About SIPRI's data on arms transfers

SIPRI's statistical data on arms transfers relates to actual deliveries of major arms, as defined by SIPRI. SIPRI measures the volume of international transfers of major arms using a common unit—the trend-indicator value (TIV). The methodology for the SIPRI TIV is described on the Arms Transfers Database web page.

As the volume of deliveries can fluctuate significantly year-on-year, SIPRI presents data for five-year periods, giving a more stable measure of trends. Percentage shares presented in this SIPRI Fact Sheet do not always add up to 100 per cent or to stated totals because of the conventions of rounding.

The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, accessible on the SIPRI website, is the only public resource that provides consistent information, often estimates, on all international transfers of major arms (including sales, gifts and production under licence) to states, international organizations and non-state groups since 1950. For a list of states in each region see the 'Regional coverage' page of SIPRI's website. The database aims to contribute to an understanding of the effects of arms flows on peace, stability and violent conflict. This fact sheet is intended to encourage the use of the database for further research, investigations, policymaking and public debate.

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