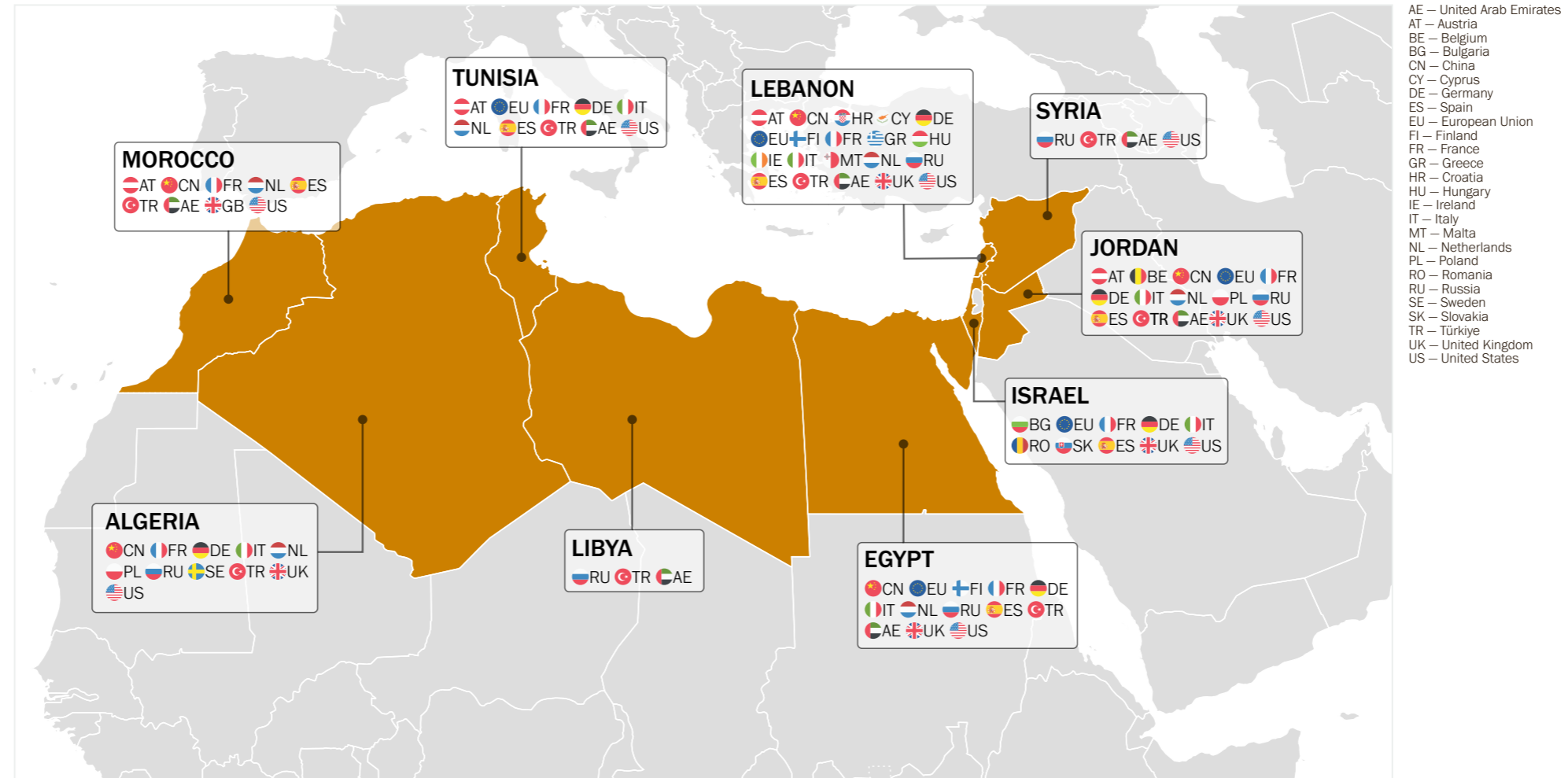


# MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE EU AND OTHER EXTERNAL ACTORS TO THE EU'S SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

## KEY FACTS

- ▶ The period 2010 to 2025 has been characterized by wide-ranging developments and events that have affected the provision of European Union (EU) military assistance to the EU's Southern Neighbourhood. The Arab uprisings, war in Syria, Libya and Gaza, and war between Iran and Israel, are just some examples.
- ▶ In some cases, the EU avoided providing significant military assistance. For example, in Libya, the EU's migration management goals meant its assistance focused on strengthening border services.
- ▶ In other cases, the role of the EU and EU member states in supplying military assistance was much more pronounced. Examples include Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel, where the EU's focus was on national security, border security and counterterrorism.
- ▶ Other actors outside of the EU also provided military assistance to states in the Southern Neighbourhood, including China, Russia, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.
- ▶ The USA is the most significant supplier of military assistance to the EU's Southern Neighbourhood, having provided most states in the region with arms, training and military education, and deployment and assistance during conflicts.
- ▶ Russia has also provided military assistance to states and non-state actors in the Southern Neighbourhood, including in Algeria, Libya and Syria.
- ▶ Türkiye's role as a provider of military assistance has grown in recent years, with provision of military assistance to Libya and Syria.

## RECIPIENTS AND SUPPLIERS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE



## KEY EVENTS

- **2013**  
 EU Foreign Affairs Council announcement regarding transfer of military equipment to Egypt. EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Libya established.
- **2015**  
 European Commission establishes the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. EU launches naval operations to disrupt trafficking in South Mediterranean Sea.
- **2020**  
 EU launches naval operations to implement the United Nations arms embargo on Libya.
- **2021**  
 EU establishes the EPF.
- **2022**  
 Council of the EU adopts first assistance measure under the EPF for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) worth €6 million.
- **2023**  
 Council of the EU adopts first assistance measure under the EPF for the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) worth €7 million. USA and Germany continue supplies of arms to Israel after Hamas-led attack and ensuing war in Gaza.
- **2024**  
 Council of the EU adopts second assistance measure under the EPF for the JAF worth €13.25 million, and for the LAF worth €15 million. Egypt and the EU elevate their partnership to a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership.
- **2025**  
 Council of the EU adopts third assistance measure for the LAF worth €60 million. The EU and Jordan enter a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership. Council of the EU adopts the third assistance measure for the JAF worth €35 million. Mandate for EUBAM Libya extended. Syrian government under Hay'at Tahrir-ul-Sham.

## MILITARY ASSISTANCE BY EU ACTORS

The EU and its member states increasingly integrated military assistance into their engagement with the Southern Neighbourhood, driven by priorities such as regional stability, counterterrorism, border security and migration management. The European Peace Facility (EPF) became the EU's main tool for supporting partner armed forces, particularly in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon through funding for surveillance systems, mobility assets, medical support, logistics and border control capabilities. In North Africa, EU assistance also focused on migration and border management through programmes in Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Some EU member states have also played leading roles through arms transfers, training missions, joint exercises and security partnerships. France expanded naval and counterterrorism cooperation with Egypt, Jordan and Morocco; Germany combined arms exports with capacity-building initiatives; and Italy supported Lebanese security forces through bilateral military missions.

## MILITARY ASSISTANCE BY OTHER EXTERNAL ACTORS

### CHINA

China expanded defence ties with the Southern Neighbourhood mainly through arms transfers and strategic partnerships. Algeria was the principal recipient, receiving Chinese frigates, artillery, missiles, drones and armoured vehicles, while Morocco and Egypt imported air-defence systems, aircraft and armed drones. Although China's military role remained smaller than Western or Russian involvement, China increasingly positioned itself as an alternative security partner.

### RUSSIA

Russia was a major military actor in the Southern Neighbourhood, especially in Algeria, Syria and Libya. It combined extensive arms exports with military deployments, advisers, private contractors and operational support. Russia intervened in Syria from 2015, establishing long-term bases and supporting the Assad government. In Libya, Russia backed Khalifa Haftar with aircraft, missiles, air-defence systems and military assistance operations.

### TÜRKIYE

Türkiye significantly expanded its military role in the region during 2010–25, particularly in Syria and Libya. Türkiye supported opposition groups in Syria with weapons, training and coordination structures, while conducting cross-border military operations against ISIS and Kurdish forces. In Libya, Türkiye backed western factions and the Government of National Accord through military cooperation agreements, deployments, arms transfers and operational assistance.

### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The UAE increased its military engagement in the Southern Neighbourhood through arms transfers, joint exercises and direct operational support. The UAE supplied weapons to several regional states, including Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, while deepening defence cooperation with Egypt through exercises. In Libya, the UAE supported the House of Representatives (HOR) rebel group with weapons systems, air support and assistance.

### THE UNITED STATES

The USA was the dominant provider of military assistance, combining arms transfers, military financing, troop deployments, training and joint exercises. Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco received extensive US support through the Foreign Military Financing programme, weapons sales and education programmes. The USA also maintained deployments in Syria and Jordan while supporting regional operations, counterterrorism and interoperability initiatives.