

IV. The financial value of states' arms exports

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Official data on the financial value of states' arms exports in the years 2010–19 is presented in table 9.6. The data is taken from reports by—or direct quotes from—national governments. The stated data coverage reflects the language used by the original source. National practices in this area vary, but the term 'arms exports' generally refers to the financial value of the arms actually delivered; 'arms export licences' generally refers to the financial value of the licences for arms exports issued by the national export licensing authority; and 'arms export agreements' or 'arms export orders' refers to the financial value of contracts or other agreements signed for arms exports.

The arms export data for the states in table 9.6 is based on national definitions and methodologies and is thus not necessarily comparable across countries. There is no internationally agreed definition of what constitutes 'arms' and governments use different lists when collecting and reporting data on the financial value of their arms exports. In addition, there is no standardized methodology concerning the collection and reporting of such data, with some states reporting on export licences issued or used and other states using data collected from customs agencies.

According to the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, states that produce official data on the financial value of their arms exports accounted for over 90 per cent of the total volume of deliveries of major arms. By adding together the data in table 9.6 it is therefore possible to attain a rough estimate of the financial value of the total global arms trade. However, there are significant limitations in using this data to make such an estimate. First, as noted above, the data sets used are based on different definitions and methodologies and are thus not directly comparable. Second, several states (e.g. the United Kingdom and the United States) do not release data on arms exports but only on arms export agreements and licences, while other states (e.g. China) do not release any data on arms exports, export licences, agreements or orders. Nonetheless, by adding together the data that states have made available on the financial value of their arms exports, as well as estimates for those that only provide data on arms export licences, agreements or orders, it is possible to estimate the rough total value of the global arms trade. The estimate of the financial value of the global arms trade for 2019—the latest year for which relevant data is available—was at least \$118 billion.¹ However, the true figure is likely to be higher.

¹ For a full description of the methodology used to calculate this figure see the 'Financial value of the global arms trade' page of the SIPRI website.

Table 9.6. The financial value of states' arms exports according to national government and industry sources, 2010–19

Figures are in constant (2019) US\$ m. Conversion to constant US dollars is made using the market exchange rates of the reporting year and the US consumer price index (CPI). Years are calendar years unless otherwise stated.

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Explanation of data
Australia ^d	..	..	..	1 186	1 587	3 409	886	1 271	3 732	3 657	Arms export licences
Austria	579	679	651	766	769	402	753	447	358	381	Arms exports
	2 745	2 579	2 223	3 459	1 294	1 297	4 690	2 359	1 821	1 935	Arms export licences
Belgium	1 557	1 319	1 386	893	6 466	1 334	1 471	871	1 399	3 208	Arms export licences
Bosnia and Herzegovina	16	65	59	57	96	126	123	122	142	..	Arms exports
	43	90	66	163	185	275	359	348	280	..	Arms export licences
Bulgaria	401	365	313	342	578	1 677	1 196	1 433	919	687	Arms exports
	460	352	499	715	1 186	764	1 483	1 633	1 259	959	Arms export licences
Canada ^b	464	728	1 161	726	778	570	577	827	1 625	2 831	Arms exports
Croatia	84	55	73	125	102	47	87	80	118	48	Arms exports
	691	242	341	1 037	691	457	446	533	459	600	Arms export licences
Czechia	337	289	392	420	613	673	812	674	656	693	Arms exports
	700	547	379	478	717	888	405	598	469	619	Arms export licences
Denmark	..	..	..	34	64	92	132	107	99	185	Arms exports
	584	374	318	1 139	210	160	239	241	320	175	Arms export licences
Estonia	3	553	4	4	6	17	11	75	44	12	Arms export licences
Finland	92	153	83	325	319	117	155	123	154	127	Arms exports
	95	291	169	501	325	433	115	230	212	118	Arms export licences
France	5 786	5 977	5 405	4 924	5 796	7 419	8 389	7 914	8 371	11 113	Arms exports
	7 947	10 297	6 892	10 016	11 775	20 243	16 425	8 161	10 957	9 317	Arms export licences
Germany	3 290	2 030	1 353	1 359	2 612	1 860	2 947	3 118	927	923	Arms exports ^c
	8 526	17 056	12 699	12 152	9 340	15 335	8 137	7 721	5 815	9 542	Arms export licences ^d
Greece	458	357	486	..	..	..	..	..	160	113	Arms export licences
Hungary	30	28	39	47	48	55	22	52	44	59	Arms exports
	214	246	386	748	620	1 535	694	687	476	638	Arms export licences

India ^e	..	..	96	129	176	346	241	749	1 239	1 295	Arms exports
Ireland	37	43	67	90	124	51	74	29	40	47	Arms export licences
Israel	8 442	>7 000	8 318	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Arms exports
	>7 300	6 615	..	7 177	6 112	6 148	6 924	9 596	7 636	7 200	Arms export agreements
Italy	957	1 616	4 306	4 039	4 771	3 845	3 363	3 386	2 953	2 674	Arms exports
	5 048	8 315	5 952	3 131	3 798	9 430	17 244	11 186	5 743	4 575	Arms export licences
Korea, South	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 702	1 480	Arms exports
	1 393	2 707	2 620	3 749	3 901	3 819	2 725	3 254	..	..	Arms export agreements
Latvia	12	<1	<1	<1	4	..	<1	105	..	..	Arms exports
	12	<1	<1	<1	4	1	<1	105	13	15	Arms export licences
Lithuania	23	76	27	23	27	32	48	83	114	58	Arms exports
	36	81	29	32	22	71	108	71	54	55	Arms export licences
Montenegro	9	..	4	4	13	5	1	7	10	..	Arms exports
	16	6	7	9	16	13	9	11	22	..	Arms export licences
Netherlands	1 050	1 220	1 176	369	359	708	667	782	687	499	Arms exports
	1 418	657	1 346	1 403	2 959	1 044	1 668	946	773	1 033	Arms export licences
Norway ^f	712	725	742	616	505	437	454	676	604	504	Arms exports
Pakistan ^g	20	11	14	14	18	65	33	60	..	216	Arms exports
Poland	..	..	..	490	567	504	451	555	585	438	Arms exports
	710	1 341	906	1 250	1 318	1 518	1 445	1 271	1 871	2 153	Arms export licences
Portugal	31	39	44	256	225	228	703	190	252	439	Arms exports
	33	49	74	213	365	81	287	69	207	195	Arms export licences
Romania	191	207	119	258	228	193	213	227	234	161	Arms exports
	236	291	256	431	357	263	284	310	245	172	Arms export licences
Russia	11 724	15 571	16 926	17 230	16 847	15 640	15 978	>15 000	16 290	>15 000	Arms exports
Serbia	225	197	209	191	338	417	479	288	499	..	Arms exports
	885	450	499	892	865	874	985	855	793	..	Arms export licences
Slovakia	23	16	36	45	52	68	71	81	112	76	Arms exports
	90	47	104	178	384	339	245	269	227	210	Arms export licences

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Explanation of data
Slovenia	9	14	6	4	7	13	18	28	14	17	Arms exports
	17	19	13	13	4	37	51	60	78	56	Arms export licences
South Africa	1 334	1 438	1 438	359	297	232	302	269	364	281	Arms export licences
Spain	1 752	3 841	2 794	5 694	4 589	4 450	4 773	5 111	4 472	4 525	Arms exports
	3 475	4 536	11 009	6 296	5 253	12 772	6 538	24 791	13 704	11 296	Arms export licences
Sweden	2 236	2 435	1 604	2 012	1 253	954	1 367	1 370	1 332	1 721	Arms exports
	2 152	1 908	1 304	1 656	705	633	7 695	991	991	1 428	Arms export licences
Switzerland	721	1 117	831	546	665	501	445	474	531	732	Arms exports
Turkey	743	929	1 336	1 525	1 779	1 785	1 787	1 814	2 072	2 741	Arms exports
Ukraine	1 122	1 141	1 140	1 097	..	615	820	..	780	908	Arms exports
United Kingdom	10 560	9 833	15 470	16 814	15 115	12 689	8 480	12 037	19 015	14 031	Arms export orders ^h
	4 405	11 065	3 811	7 624	3 705	9 593	4 654	8 876	3 799	6 511	Arms export licences
United States	21 333	22 210	19 540	22 309	20 976	22 845	22 488	31 877	..	..	Arms exports ⁱ
	24 859	29 368	69 834	25 770	33 888	48 411	29 310	51 493	..	..	Arms export agreements ^j
	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	56 667	55 386	Arms export agreements ^k
	39 963	49 866	37 382	22 824	68 072	79 766	53 090	53 795	64 582	55 062	Arms export licences ^l

.. = data not available.

Note: The states included in this table are those that provide official data on the financial value of either 'arms exports', 'contracts signed for arms exports', 'arms export orders placed' or 'licences for arms exports' for at least 6 of the 10 years covered and where the average of the values given in at least one of the data sets exceeds \$10 million. The arms export data for the different states in this table is not necessarily comparable and may be based on significantly different definitions and methodologies.

^a Figures cover the period 1 July–30 June, e.g. the 2019 figure covers the period 1 July 2019–30 June 2020.

^b Figures exclude exports to the USA.

^c Figures cover only exports of 'war weapons' as defined by German national legislation.

^d Figures include arms export licences for international collaborative projects.

^e Figures for 2013–16 cover the period 1 Apr.–31 Mar., e.g. the figure for 2016 covers the period 1 Apr. 2016–31 Mar. 2017.

^f Figures exclude dual-use goods and defence-related services.

^g Figures for 2010–17 cover the period 1 Apr.–31 Mar., e.g. the figure for 2017 covers the period 1 Apr. 2017–31 Mar. 2018. The 2019 figure covers the period 1 Aug. 2018–31 July 2019.

^h Figures cover exports of defence equipment and additional aerospace equipment and services.

ⁱ Figures include items sold under the government-to-government Foreign Military Sales programme, as well as Direct Commercial Sales by US companies to foreign governments. Figures cover the period 1 Oct.–30 Sep., e.g. the figure for 2017 covers the period 1 Oct. 2016–30 Sep. 2017.

^j Figures were calculated by the reporting authority using an old methodology. Arms export agreements are counted as such if the US Government and recipient government signed a Letter of Agreement. Figures only include items sold under the government-to-government Foreign Military Sales programme. They do not include Direct Commercial Sales by US companies to foreign governments. Figures cover the period 1 Oct.–30 Sep., e.g. the figure for 2017 covers the period 1 Oct. 2016–30 Sep. 2017.

^k Figures were calculated using a new methodology, which the reporting authority adopted starting in 2020. Arms export agreements are counted as such if the US Government and recipient government signed a Letter of Agreement and an initial payment was made. Figures only include items sold under the government-to-government Foreign Military Sales programme. They do not include Direct Commercial Sales by US companies to foreign governments.

^l Figures only include items sold as Direct Commercial Sales. They do not include sales under the government-to-government Foreign Military Sales programme. Figures are for the period 1 Oct.–30 Sep., e.g. the figure for 2019 covers the period 1 Oct. 2018–30 Sep. 2019.

Sources: Reports by—or direct quotes from—national governments. For a full list of sources and all available financial data on arms exports see the ‘Financial value of the global arms trade’ page of the SIPRI website.

It is difficult to assess the trend in the value of the global arms trade over time because countries do not always report consistently on their arms export figures each year. For instance, national reporting authorities may change their methodologies, as has been the case with the USA, which is by far the largest arms exporter. This means that comparisons of the value of the global arms trade in different years provide only a very rough indication of trends over time. Nevertheless, the available data suggests a significant real-terms increase over time in the value of the global arms trade, from at least \$83 billion in 2010 (in constant 2019 US dollars) to at least \$118 billion in 2019. Despite this increase, the estimated value of the global arms trade for 2019 was less than 0.5 per cent of the value of the total global trade of all products and services in 2019.²

² The value of the total global trade in all products and services in 2019 was \$24 920 billion. World Trade Organization, 'Trade set to plunge as Covid-19 pandemic upends global economy', Press release, 8 Apr. 2020.