

# SIPRI ARMS TRANSFERS DATA, 2008

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## INTRODUCTION

The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database contains information on all international transfers of major conventional weapons (including sales, gifts and transfers of technology) to states, international organizations and armed non-state groups since 1950.<sup>1</sup> The database can be used to track changes in the trends in the volume of transfers of major conventional weapons and to answer such questions as:

- Who are the main suppliers and recipients of major conventional weapons?
- How have the relationships between different suppliers and recipients changed over time?
- Where do countries in conflict get their weapons from?
- How do states implement their export control regulations?
- Where are destabilizing build-ups of weapons occurring today?

The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database is available online at <http://arms.trade.sipri.org/>. From 27 April 2009 it includes newly released information on arms transfers during 2008. This Fact Sheet describes the trends in international arms transfers that are revealed by the new data in the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. It lists the main exporters and importers for the period 2004–2008 and describes the changes in regional trends.

Since the volume of deliveries of arms can fluctuate significantly from one year to the next, SIPRI uses a five-year moving average to give a more stable measure of trends in international transfers of major conventional weapons. The trend for the decade 1999–2008 is shown in figure 1; each data point in the graph represents an average for the preceding five-year period.

## THE TOP 5 SUPPLIERS OF MAJOR CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, 2004–2008

The five biggest suppliers of major conventional weapons for the period 2004–2008 were the United States, Russia, Germany, France and the United Kingdom (see table 1 and figure 2). The USA and Russia remained by far the largest exporters, accounting for 31 per cent and 25 per cent of all exports,

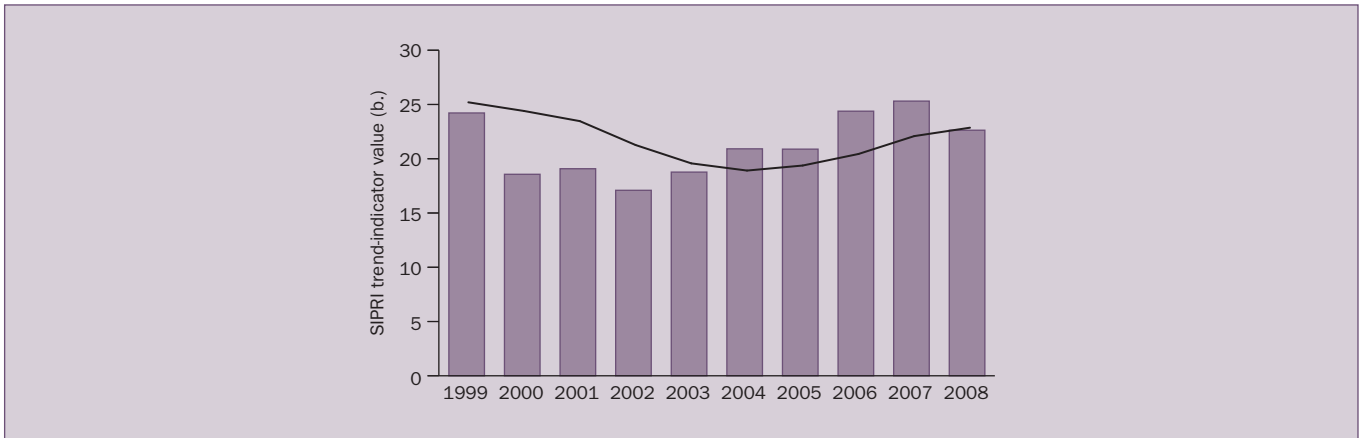
## SUMMARY

● The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database now contains information on all international transfers of major conventional weapons from 1950 to the end of 2008. It is the only publicly available resource providing consistent data on international arms transfers for this length of time. This Fact Sheet describes the trends that are revealed by the new data.

The five biggest suppliers for the period 2004–2008 were the USA, Russia, Germany, France and the UK. The five biggest recipients were China, India, the UAE, South Korea and Greece. The UAE rose to third place from 16th place in 1999–2003, and transfers to the Middle East were 38 per cent higher in 2004–2008 than in 1999–2003.

While China was the largest recipient of major conventional weapons for the period 2004–2008, the volume of its imports has declined dramatically since 2007. The volume of deliveries to Taiwan has also fallen, dropping by 44 per cent between 1999–2003 and 2004–2008.

<sup>1</sup> The database does not cover international transfers of small arms.



**Figure 1.** The trend in transfers of major conventional weapons, 1999–2008

The bar graph shows annual totals and the line graph shows the five-year moving average. Five-year averages are plotted at the last year of each five-year period. The SIPRI trend-indicator value gives an indication of the volume of international transfers of major conventional weapons. The method used to calculate the SIPRI trend-indicator value is described on the SIPRI Arms Transfers Programme website at <<http://www.sipri.org/contents/armstrad/atmethods.html>>

respectively. The top 5 suppliers accounted for 78 per cent of exports of major conventional weapons in the period 2004–2008, compared with 81 per cent for the period 1999–2003 (see table 2). The UK returned to being the fifth largest exporter in 2008. It had been replaced by the Netherlands in 2007 because of increased Dutch exports of surplus second-hand equipment.

- More than a third (37 per cent) of US deliveries of major convention weapons for the period 2004–2008 went to the Middle East, including around 207 combat aircraft and over 5000 guided bombs. Several major new deals were under discussion in 2008, including the sale of Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile (ABM) surface-to-air missile systems to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- Russia’s arms exports were 14 per cent higher in 2004–2008 than in 1999–2003, although its overall share of the global market remained roughly the same. Around 71 per cent of Russian arms were exported to the Asia–Pacific region for 2004–2008, with deliveries of advanced combat aircraft and naval vessels to China and India accounting for a considerable share. At the same time, deliveries to Africa and Latin America have increased by around 200 per cent and 900 per cent, respectively. The majority of these transfers went to Algeria and Venezuela.
- The volume of Germany’s arms exports increased by 70 per cent between 1999–2003 and 2004–2008 and its share of the global market rose from 7 per cent to 10 per cent. Much of this increase was due to exports to European destinations, which grew by 123 per cent. The two biggest recipients were Greece and Turkey, which between them accounted for nearly a third of German exports. In recent years, both countries have received Leopard-2A4 tanks and licensed produced submarines.

***Russia’s deliveries to Latin America have increased by around 900 per cent***

**Table 1.** The top 5 suppliers of major conventional weapons and their largest recipients, 2004–2008

Supplier	Share of global arms exports (%)	Total no. of recipients	Main recipients (share of supplier's transfers)		
			1st	2nd	3rd
United States	31	69	South Korea (15%)	Israel (13%)	UAE (11%)
Russia	25	46	China (42%)	India (21%)	Algeria (8%)
Germany	10	47	Turkey (15%)	Greece (13%)	South Africa (12%)
France	8	39	UAE (32%)	Singapore (13%)	Greece (12%)
United Kingdom	4	37	United States (21%)	India (14%)	Chile (9%)

**Table 2.** The top 5 suppliers of major conventional weapons and their largest recipients, 1999–2003

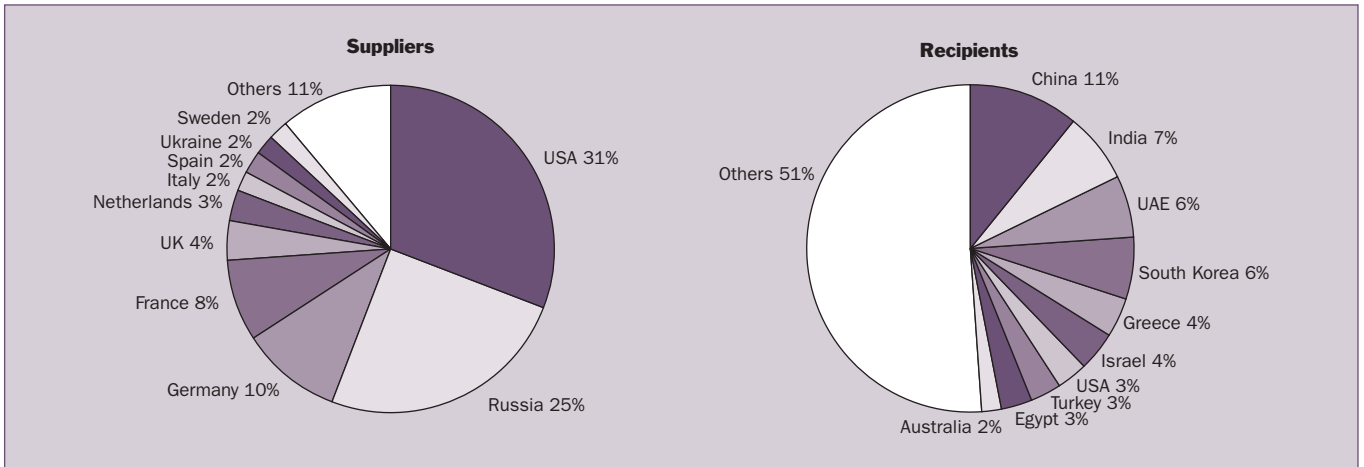
Supplier	Share of global arms exports (%)	Total no. of recipients	Main recipients (share of supplier's transfers)		
			1st	2nd	3rd
United States	35	77	Taiwan (9%)	Egypt (8%)	Japan (8%)
Russia	26	47	China (44%)	India (23%)	Iran (4%)
Germany	7	56	Turkey (14%)	Australia (11%)	South Korea (7%)
France	7	55	UAE (21%)	Pakistan (12%)	Turkey (11%)
United Kingdom	6	44	Canada (18%)	United States (12%)	Turkey (10%)

- For the period 2004–2008, 40 per cent of France's arms exports went to states in the Middle East. For the second year in a row, there were no outstanding orders for newly built French fighter aircraft. However, France was reported to be in advance negotiations for deals with Libya and the UAE.
- The UK's largest customers in recent years have been the USA and India, which accounted for 21 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively, of British transfers for the period 2004–2008. India is in the process of receiving 66 Hawk-100 trainer aircraft and 20 Jaguar-S fighter aircraft from the UK. In 2009 the UK is due to begin the delivery of 72 Typhoon combat aircraft to Saudi Arabia, which will help to cement its position among the top five suppliers.

### THE TOP 5 RECIPIENTS OF MAJOR CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, 1999–2008

Since 1950 the list of five states that receive most major conventional weapons has changed much more than that of the five largest suppliers. However, in recent years the composition of the list has remained relatively stable. China and India were the world's two largest arms importers for both 1999–2003 and 2004–2008 (see tables 3 and 4). The most significant change in the composition of the top 5 arms importers has been the entry of the UAE, which rose from being the 16th largest importer in the period 1999–2003 to being the third largest for the period 2004–2008. The top 5 recipients accounted for 35 per cent of imports of major conventional weapons for the period 2004–2008, compared with 34 per cent for the period 1999–2003.

*The UAE rose from being the 16th largest importer in the period 1999–2003 to being the third largest for the period 2004–2008*



**Figure 2.** The suppliers and recipients of major conventional weapons, 2004–2008

**REGIONAL TRENDS IN MAJOR CONVENTIONAL WEAPON DELIVERIES, 2004–2008**

The regional breakdown of arms deliveries has remained relatively stable over the past 10 years. The most significant shift in recent years has been a rise in transfers to the Middle East, which has led to the region’s share of global arms imports rising from 15 per cent to 18 per cent.

**Africa**

African states accounted for 7 per cent of international imports of major conventional weapons over the period 2004–2008, compared with 6 per cent for 1999–2003. During the period 2004–2008, Algeria and South Africa were the two largest arms importers in Africa, accounting for 35 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, of the continent’s imports. The next largest recipient of major conventional weapons was Sudan, which accounted for 8 per cent of Africa’s imports. Excluding South Africa, arms transfers to countries in sub-Saharan Africa accounted for only 2 per cent of the world total for the period 2004–2008. However, even small volumes of transfers of major conventional weapons can have a significant impact on conflict dynamics in the region.

*Excluding South Africa, arms transfers to sub-Saharan Africa accounted for only 2 per cent of the world total*

- Deliveries to Algeria in 2008 included the last of 180 T-90 tanks and an estimated 18 of a total of 28 Su-30MK combat aircraft, both purchased from Russia. Two Project 636 Kilo Class submarines and a significant number of air defence systems are also on order from Russia. Morocco, Algeria’s neighbour and long-term rival, embarked on a significant military modernization programme in 2008, ordering 24 F-16C combat aircraft from the USA, 1 large FREMM frigate from France and 3 smaller SIGMA-90 frigates from the Netherlands.
- Chad’s arms imports were five times higher over the period 2004–2008 than 1999–2003, although globally it remains a minor recipient. Weapons delivered to Chad in 2008 included the first of 6 Su-25 ground attack aircraft from Ukraine and the last of around 82 armoured vehicles

**Table 3.** The top 5 recipients of major conventional weapons and their largest suppliers, 2004–2008

Recipient	Share of global arms imports (%)	Total no. of suppliers	Main suppliers (share of recipient's transfers)		
			1st	2nd	3rd
China	11	6	Russia (92%)	France (3%)	Ukraine (2%)
India	7	11	Russia (71%)	United Kingdom (9%)	Israel (6%)
UAE	6	13	United States (54%)	France (43%)	Germany (1%)
South Korea	6	8	United States (73%)	Germany (12%)	France (9%)
Greece	4	13	Germany (31%)	United States (24%)	France (24%)

**Table 4.** The top 5 recipients of major conventional weapons and their largest suppliers, 1999–2003

Recipient	Share of global arms imports (%)	Total no. of suppliers	Main suppliers (share of recipient's transfers)		
			1st	2nd	3rd
China	12	9	Russia (92%)	France (3%)	Ukraine (2%)
India	8	14	Russia (78%)	Uzbekistan (5%)	Germany (3%)
Greece	5	13	United States (52%)	Russia (17%)	Netherlands (10%)
Turkey	5	10	United States (54%)	France (15%)	United Kingdom (11%)
South Korea	4	10	United States (67%)	Germany (11%)	France (11%)

from Belgium. Sudan, which has tense relations with Chad, took delivery of an estimated 10 Su-25 aircraft from Belarus.

- During 2007 and 2008 Ukraine delivered an estimated 110 T-72 tanks and 11 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers to Kenya. In September 2008 a consignment of 33 T-72 tanks and 6 BM-21 launchers was hijacked by Somali pirates while en route from Ukraine to Kenya. The cargo was held for 4 months, during which time there was much speculation that the final destination for this cargo was intended to be the Government of Southern Sudan, rather than Kenya, despite Kenyan and Ukrainian protestations.

## The Americas

States in the Americas accounted for 11 per cent of imports of major conventional weapons over the period 2004–2008, compared with 8 per cent for 1999–2003. Transfers to South America were 94 per cent higher in 2004–2008 than in 1999–2003. The USA was the largest importer of conventional weapons in the Americas for the period 2004–2008, and the seventh largest in the world, up from 14th place for 1999–2003. Chile was the largest importer of conventional weapons in South America for the period 2004–2008 and the 11th largest in the world, up from 36th for 1999–2003.

- Several states in South America are undergoing force modernization programmes, indicating that the volume of transfers to the region will remain high. Most significantly, in December 2008 Brazil signed an €8.6 billion (\$11.3 billion) agreement with France for the licensed production of 50 EC-725 helicopters, 4 conventional submarines and a nuclear-powered submarine.



- For the period 2004–2008 Venezuela was the world's 18th largest recipient of military equipment, up from 55th place for 1999–2003. In 2008 the final delivery took place of many weapons ordered from Russia in 2006 and 2007, including the last of 24 Su-30MK combat aircraft. During 2008 there was considerable speculation regarding follow-on deals with Russia, but no new contract was signed.
- Almost half of US imports for the period 2004–2008 came from EU member states. Nominally European products have been favoured over rival US products in several recent high-profile competitions, including for EC-145 helicopters and C-27J transport aircraft. However, most of the actual production under these contracts will take place in the USA.

### Asia

Asian states received 37 per cent of all transfers of major conventional weapons in the period 2004–2008, compared with 40 per cent for 1999–2003. Transfers to East Asia and South East Asia accounted for 67 per cent of transfers to Asia in 2004–2008, those to South Asia for 25 per cent, to Oceania for 7 per cent and to Central Asia for only 1 per cent. Three of the four largest importers for 2004–2008 are Asian states: China, India and South Korea.

*Three of the four largest importers for 2004–2008 are Asian states*

- Transfers of major conventional weapons systems to China in 2007 and 2008 were less than half their average annual volume in 2002–2006. The volume of deliveries to Taiwan has also fallen, dropping by 44 per cent between 1999–2003 and 2004–2008. However, in late 2008 the USA agreed to a long-discussed weapon package for Taiwan.
- The volume of deliveries to Pakistan has increased significantly in recent years. Forty-one per cent of all transfers to Pakistan over the past 5 years took place in 2008. Over the period 2004–2008, 40 per cent of Pakistan's imports of major conventional weapons came from the USA. Significant deliveries in 2008 included M-109A5 155-mm artillery systems, P-3CUP Orion maritime patrol aircraft and F-16A combat aircraft.
- South Korean imports of major conventional weapons were 61 per cent higher in 2004–2008 than in 1999–2003. In 2007 and 2008 South Korea was the world's largest importer of major conventional weapons. The USA accounted for 73 per cent of arms transfers to South Korea for the period 2004–2008, including long-range F-15K combat aircraft along with engines and other components for South Korean-designed aircraft and ships.

### Europe

European states received 24 per cent of international transfers of major conventional weapons for the period 2004–2008, compared with 26 per cent for 1999–2003. Member states of the European Union (EU) accounted for 19 per cent of global arms imports over the period 2004–2008 and 17 per cent over the period 1999–2003. The largest importer of major conventional weapons in Europe in recent years has been Greece. However, it has fallen



from being the world's third largest recipient of major conventional weapons for the period 1999–2003 to fifth place for 2004–2008.

- Turkey has fallen from being the fourth largest recipient of major conventional weapons for the period 1999–2003 to eighth place for 2004–2008. Turkey signed a number of significant deals in 2008, including one for 51 A-129 combat helicopters from Italy, which will be produced under licence in Turkey.
- Arms transfers to Georgia received a significant amount of media attention in the run-up to the conflict over South Ossetia in August 2008. Georgian arms imports were nearly four times higher over the period 2004–2008 than for 1999–2003. The largest supplier of arms to Georgia was Ukraine, which accounted for 65 per cent of transfers over the period 2004–2008.
- During 2004–2008 states in Europe imported an estimated 211 fighter and ground-attack aircraft, compared with total world imports of over 1300. During 2008 there were at least 10 European states with ongoing competitions for fighter aircraft acquisitions. However, a number of these deals may be delayed, downsized or cancelled as a result of the global financial crisis.

### The Middle East

Middle Eastern states received 18 per cent of international transfers of major conventional weapons for the period 2004–2008 compared with 15 per cent for 2003–2007. Transfers to the region were 38 per cent higher in 2004–2008 than in 1999–2003. During 2004–2008, 34 per cent of all transfers to the Middle East went to the UAE, while Israel received 22 per cent and Egypt 14 per cent. Despite significant speculation about Iran's arms import plans, it accounted for only 5 per cent of transfers to the Middle East for the period 2004–2008 and was the 27th largest recipient of major conventional weapons worldwide.

*Transfers to the Middle East were 38 per cent higher in 2004–2008 than in 1999–2003*

- During the period 2004–2008 the UAE was the largest recipient of major conventional weapons in the region and the third largest in the world. Imports in this period included around 80 F-16E combat aircraft from the USA and around 50 Mirage-2000-9 combat aircraft from France. The UAE placed a number of significant orders in 2008 and looks set to remain a significant importer in the coming years.
- During the period 2004–2008 Iraq was the world's 28th largest recipient of major conventional weapons, with 40 per cent of its imports coming from the USA. In 2008 Iraq ordered 140 M1A1 tanks from the USA and announced plans to obtain advanced combat aircraft and additional armoured vehicles.
- Israel's arms imports in 2004–2008 consisted primarily of 102 F-16I combat aircraft and related air-to-air and air-to-surface weapons. The vast majority of weapon systems ordered by or transferred to Israel during this period came from the USA. Israel also imported components for its weapon systems from a variety of countries, including EU members.

**SIPRI** is an independent international institute for research into problems of peace and conflict, especially those of arms control and disarmament. It was established in 1966 to commemorate Sweden's 150 years of unbroken peace.

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The **SIPRI Arms Transfers Programme** is one of SIPRI's longest running research programmes. As well as maintaining the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, the programme undertakes research to identify shifting trends in international arms transfers.

The **SIPRI Arms Transfers Database**, <<http://armstrade.sipri.org/>>, is a fully searchable online database containing information on all international transfers of seven categories of major conventional weapons from 1950 to the most recent full calendar year. It can be used to generate detailed written reports and statistical data on these transfers, including the suppliers and recipients, the type and number of weapon systems ordered and delivered, the years of deliveries, and the financial value of the deal.

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