

Larger but Less Known

AUTHORIZED LIGHT WEAPONS TRANSFERS

This chapter examines the global trade in light weapons, which include mortars, grenade launchers, recoilless rifles, and portable missiles and rockets. Despite the importance of light weapons to modern military operations and the potential threat to international security posed by excessive or ill-conceived light weapons transfers, the international trade in light weapons is significantly less transparent than the trade in other weapons, including small arms. The chapter sheds new light on this trade through an analysis of data on light weapons transfers to more than 70 countries. Based on this data, the Small Arms Survey estimates the annual value of the light weapons trade to be USD 1.1 billion. The chapter also includes an update of the Small Arms Survey's annual Transparency Barometer, which measures the extent to which states report on their small arms transfers.

The chapter is part of Small Arms Survey's ongoing, multiyear reassessment of the value of authorized international transfers of small arms and light weapons, their parts, accessories, and ammunition. The reassessment unpacks the previous estimate of USD 4 billion, one element of the trade at a time. This year's assessment of light weapons transfers is a significant improvement over previous assessments. By combining data from publicly available sources with hitherto unreleased data obtained directly from governments, the study captures significantly more of the documented trade in light weapons than previous efforts.

The top three exporters in 2008 were the United States, Italy, and Germany.

An analysis of this data yields an estimated annual value of USD 242 million for the documented trade, with anti-tank guided weapons (ATGWs) accounting for more than half of this total. Through extrapolation, data on the documented trade was used to derive an estimated value for the undocumented trade of USD 872 million. When combined, the two figures yield an estimated total annual value of USD 1.1 billion for international transfers of light weapons. Table 1.4 breaks down these figures into subtotals by category.



US Army soldiers fire a 120 mm mortar during a fire mission at the combat outpost Zerok in East Paktika province, Afghanistan, September 2009.
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Table 1.4 Estimated annual values of international transfers of light weapons

	MANPADS (USD million)	ATGWs (USD million)	Other light weapons (USD million)	Total (USD million)
Documented	66	129	47	242
Undocumented	36	626	210	872
Total	102	755	257	1,114

The 2011 edition of the Transparency Barometer identifies Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Germany as the three most transparent major exporters. It assesses 49 countries' reporting practices: the 48 countries covered in the 2010 Barometer plus the Philippines—all believed to have exported at least USD 10 million worth of relevant materiel in 2008 or 2009. The least transparent exporters are Iran and North Korea, both scoring zero. Belgium and the United States broke into the top ten this year, replacing Sweden and Denmark (which now rank 11th and 14th, respectively). The average score fell slightly since last year (from 11.50 to 11.40), although the average score of the top ten countries rose from 17.45 to 18.00 points. Belgium experienced the greatest point increase with its score rising by three points (from 14.75 to 17.75) due to better reporting in the Belgian regions on temporary exports, end users, and licences granted and refused. The greatest increase in percentage terms was Taiwan, whose score rose 24 per cent from last year thanks to better reporting to UN Comtrade (see Table 1.2).

The average annual documented trade in light weapons totals USD 242 million.

Other major findings of this chapter include:

- Despite recent increases in the number of countries reporting transfers of small arms and light weapons to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the overall quality and amount of information on light weapon transfers remain low.
- The international trade in man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) appears notably small. Only 18 of the 74 countries under review imported any MANPADS between 2003 and 2009, and only 12 imported more than 100 units. Given data limitations, however, these figures are probably underestimates.
- The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have contributed to significant increases in the procurement of anti-tank guided weapons. For example, the UK's imports of Javelin ATGWs from 2005 to 2009 exceeded total imports for the years 2000 to 2004 by 5,331 units—a 4,000 per cent increase.
- The 2011 Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer identifies Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Germany, Serbia, and Romania as the most transparent of the major small arms and light weapons exporters. The least transparent major exporters are Iran and North Korea, both scoring zero.
- In 2008 the top exporters of small arms and light weapons (those with annual exports of at least USD 100 million), according to available customs data, were (in descending order) the United States, Italy, Germany, Brazil, Switzerland, Israel, Austria, South Korea, Belgium, the Russian Federation, Spain, Turkey, Norway, and Canada.
- In 2008 the top importers of small arms and light weapons (those with annual imports of at least USD 100 million), according to available customs data, were (in descending order) the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, France, and Pakistan.

The Survey's multi-year reassessment of the global trade in small arms and light weapons will conclude in 2012 with a revised estimate for the entire trade. Findings to date suggest that the revised total will be significantly higher than previous estimates. As noted above, this chapter estimates the annual total value of international authorized transfers of light weapons at USD 1.1 billion. Combining this value with the revised estimate for authorized transfers of firearms (USD 1.68 billion) and ammunition for small arms and light weapons (USD 4.3 billion) yields a running (incomplete) total of nearly USD 7.1 billion per year. This figure will likely grow significantly following the completion of the next year's assessment of parts and accessories for small arms and light weapons. ■

Table 1.2 Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer 2011, covering major exporters*

	Total (25 max)	Export report (year covered)/ EU Annual Report**	UN Comtrade	UN Register	Timeliness (1.5 max)	Access and consistency (2 max)	Clarity (5 max)	Comprehensiveness (6.5 max)	Deliveries (4 max)	Licences granted (4 max)	Licences refused (2 max)
Switzerland	21.00	x (09)	x	x	1.50	1.50	4.00	5.25	3.00	4.00	1.75
United Kingdom	20.00	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	2.00	4.00	5.00	3.50	2.50	1.50
Germany	18.75	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	1.50
Serbia ¹	18.50	x (08)	x	x	1.50	1.00	3.25	4.75	3.50	2.50	2.00
Romania	18.00	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	2.00	2.50	4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
Belgium	17.75	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	2.00	2.75	3.50	3.50	3.00	1.50
Netherlands	17.00	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	2.00	3.50	4.00	2.50	2.50	1.00
Spain	16.50	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	2.50	3.25	4.00	2.50	1.25
Norway	16.25	x (09)	x	x	1.50	1.50	4.00	3.75	3.50	2.00	0.00
United States ²	16.25	x (08)	x	x	1.50	1.50	2.75	4.50	3.00	3.00	0.00
Sweden	15.50	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	2.00	3.25	4.25	3.00	1.50	0.00
Italy	15.25	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	3.25	4.50	3.00	1.50	0.00
Czech Republic ³	15.00	x (09) / EU Report	x	x (08)	1.50	1.50	2.75	3.50	3.50	1.50	0.75
Denmark	14.75	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.00	0.00
Finland ⁴	14.00	x (08) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	0.00
Poland ⁵	14.00	EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.00	1.75	3.75	4.00	2.00	0.00
France ⁶	13.50	x (09) / EU Report	x	x (08)	1.50	1.50	3.25	2.75	3.00	1.50	0.00
Slovakia	13.50	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	2.25	3.25	3.00	2.00	0.00
Montenegro ⁷	12.50	x (09)	x	-	1.50	0.50	2.75	4.25	1.50	2.00	0.00
Austria ⁸	12.25	x (08) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	1.75	2.50	3.50	1.50	0.00
Portugal ⁹	12.25	x (08) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	2.00	2.75	3.00	1.50	0.00
Canada ¹⁰	11.75	x (06)	x	x (08)	1.50	1.00	2.25	4.00	3.00	0.00	0.00
Bulgaria	11.50	x (09) / EU Report	x	x	1.50	1.50	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.50	0.00
Israel	10.75	-	x	x	1.50	1.00	1.75	3.50	3.00	0.00	0.00

Transparency Barometer notes

* Major exporters are countries that export—or are believed to export—at least USD 10 million worth of small arms, light weapons, their parts, accessories, and ammunition in a given year. The 2011 Barometer includes all countries that qualified as a major exporter at least once during the 2001-09 period.

** x indicates that a report was issued.

*** The Barometer assesses information provided in the EU's *Twelfth Annual Report*, reflecting military exports by EU member states in 2009.

Scoring system

The scoring system for the 2011 Barometer is identical to that used in 2010, providing comprehensive, nuanced, and consistent thresholds for the various categories. The Barometer's seven categories assess: timeliness as well as access and consistency in reporting (categories i-ii), clarity and comprehensiveness (iii-iv), and the level of detail provided on actual deliveries, licences granted, and licences refused (v-vii). For more detailed information on the scoring guidelines, see <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weapons-and-markets/tools/the-transparency-barometer.html>.

Explanatory notes

Note A: The Barometer is based on each country's most recent arms export report, made publicly available between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2010.

Note B: The Barometer takes into account national reporting to the UN Register from 1 January 2009 to 12 January 2011 as well as information states have submitted to UN Comtrade for their 2009 exports up to 31 December 2010.

Note C: The fact that the Barometer is based on three sources—national arms export reports, reporting to the UN Register, and UN customs data—works to the advantage of states that publish data in all three outlets. Information provided to each of the three sources is reflected in the scoring. The same information is not credited twice, however.

Country-specific notes

1) Serbia published a national arms export report in 2010 that was limited to data from 2008. For the first time, the country is evaluated on a 25-point scale as it can now fulfil the criteria of reporting during three consecutive years and can therefore earn all the points potentially available under 'access and consistency'.

2) The US report is divided into several documents. For the purposes of the Barometer, the 'US annual report' refers to the State Department report pursuant to Section 655 on direct commercial sales, as well as the report on foreign military sales that is prepared by the Department of Defense. The reports are assessed together to provide a composite picture of US government transparency. The State Department did not publish the direct commercial sales report for 2009 by the cut-off date. The United States is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent report, covering activities in 2008.

3) The Czech Republic did not submit data to the UN Register for its 2009 activities by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering export activities in 2008.

4) Finland did not issue a national report for its arms export activities in 2009 by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent national report, covering activities in 2008.

5) The authors discovered Poland's (first) national arms export report in February 2011, after the cut-off date for review. Although dated 2010, the report was posted on the website of Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs only in February 2011. The report will be assessed as part of the 2012 Barometer if no other national report is published in 2011. For the 2011 edition, Poland is evaluated based on its contribution to the *EU Annual Report*.

6) France did not submit data to the UN Register for its 2009 activities by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

7) For the first time, Montenegro is evaluated on a 25-point scale as it can now fulfil the criteria of reporting during three consecutive years and can therefore earn all the points potentially available under 'access and consistency'.

8) Austria did not issue a national report for its arms export activities in 2009 by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent national report, covering activities in 2008.

9) Portugal published a national arms export report in 2010 that was limited to data from 2008. Until last year, Portugal's *Statistical Yearbook of National Defence* was evaluated. Recently, Portugal put online its *Annual Reports on Exports of Military Equipment*. The latter report has been evaluated for the 2011 edition of the Transparency Barometer and will be used for future editions.

10) Canada did not issue a national report on export activities in 2009 by the cut-off date; it is therefore evaluated according to its most recent national report, covering export activities in 2006. Canada did not submit data on 2009 activities to the UN Register by the cut-off date; it is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

11) The authors discovered Croatia's (first) national arms export report in January 2011, after the cut-off date for review. Although dated October 2010, the report was not posted on the website of the Croatian Ministry of Economy, Labour, and Entrepreneurship, but rather uploaded on the website of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC). The report will be assessed as part of the 2012 Barometer if no other national report is published in 2011. Croatia did not submit data to the UN Register for its 2009 activities by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

12) Hungary is one of two EU member states under review that do not publish a national report; however, it does contribute information to the *EU Annual Report*. Hungary did not submit data to UN Comtrade for its 2009 activities by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

13) Pakistan did not submit data to the UN Register for its 2009 activities by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

14) Turkey did not submit data to the UN Register for its 2009 activities by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

15) The Philippines did not submit data to the UN Register for its 2009 activities by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

16) Cyprus is one of two EU member states under review that do not publish a national report; however, it does contribute information to the *EU Annual Report*. Cyprus did not submit data to the UN Register for its 2009 activities by the cut-off date. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

17) The United Arab Emirates did not submit data to UN Comtrade for its 2009 activities. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.

18) South Africa did not submit data to UN Comtrade for its 2009 activities. It is therefore evaluated on the basis of its most recent submission, covering activities in 2008.