

FINNISH ARMS CONTROL REPORT 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SUOMEN ASEVALVONTARAPORTTI 2016.

SaferGlobe's eight annual report on arms control and arms trade (published on October 24th, 2016) examines current political developments regarding Finnish export control mechanisms and policy.

Finnish arms exports to the Middle East were debated and discussed in 2015. Finland's opposition to the renewed EU firearms directive was also subject to debate. Finland opposed the stronger regulation of firearms as it was concerned that stronger regulation could weaken the credibility of its defence forces, made up primarily of a military reserve force. The research also showed deficiencies in the Finnish implementation of the EU regulation 1236/2005 concerning the ban on trade in instruments of torture (certain goods that may be used for inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.) During the summer of 2016, the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior was not aware that it was responsible for the import and export licences for such "instruments of torture", and for reporting those licences to the European Commission. Alongside the national legislation, the Finnish arms exports are regulated by international law. The practical application of these regulations is challenging.

The overall value of Finnish military material exports in 2016 was 99 million euros. For the first time since this reporting started in 2002, the EU has not been the prime destination for Finnish arms exports. Significant importers of Finnish military material in 2015 include Saudi Arabia and South Africa. The number of export licences granted for dual-use products was significantly higher in 2014 (673 licences) and 2015 (669 licences) than in 2011–2013 (average 365 licences/year). The export value of civilian firearms from Finland was 77 million euros in 2015.

The report examines some Finnish arms exports in more detail. A Czech company suspected of being involved with questionable arms shipments, received the transshipment licence for 40 armoured vehicles via Finland to Nigeria. Finland exported sniper rifles to Turkmenistan and ammunitions to Turkey, despite their human rights violations and the ongoing conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Worker's Party. The co-operation between the Finnish and Israeli arms industries continued. Finland also sold armoured vehicles to the United Arab Emirates for approximately 70 million euros, according to SaferGlobe estimates.

The Finnish Defence Forces invested closer to half a billion euros on acquisitions in 2015. In accordance with the Finnish defence material strategy, the largest acquisitions were made from countries within the EU and NATO, and from the Nordic countries. The single largest acquisition consisted of artillery ammunition. To reduce costs and increase co-operation, Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden signed a unique treaty in Europe, for the joint acquisitions of military material.

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