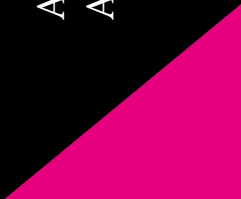


# TRADE

for beginners

A Handbook for Volunteers Campaigning  
Against the Arms Trade





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# INTRODUCTION

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**The purpose of this handbook is to provide basic information to volunteers and activists who would like to know more about the issues surrounding the arms trade and possibly campaign on the subject. We consider the global arms trade to be the main cause of human suffering and misery in a large part of the world.**

This handbook is the result of an initiative of volunteers who met at a peace camp in Kaprálov mlýn in the Czech Republic at the beginning of this year. The camp lasted for a week and three organizations participated in it: the Czech NESEHNUTÍ, the Slovak Institute of Human Rights, and the Swedish Stockholms Fredsförening, which is part of the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society. Over the course of the week we attended

topical lectures, workshops, and discussions about the arms trade, militarism, and peace campaigns. We decided to share our newly gained knowledge with other volunteers, and this is why we prepared this handbook you are about to read. Although we are aware that the topic of the arms trade might be quite complicated, our goal is to help you start orientating yourself in this complex issue. We want to prove that demanding peace is not so difficult.



# BASIC INFO ON ARMS TRADE

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**More than 1,000 billion US dollars is spent yearly on military expenditures in the world. This is equivalent to \$202 per person on the planet. At the same time, 30,000 children die each day of diseases resulting from shortages of food, water and sanitation. Were resources distributed more prudently, many lives would be saved.**

## **Fuelling Conflicts**

International arms trade is one of the most important driving forces behind military escalations, and so contributes to wars and armed conflicts.

## **Poverty**

Arms are sold to countries with widespread poverty where arms purchases may directly counteract efforts at poverty-reduction. It is a serious problem that the world chooses to prioritize military expenditures instead of tackling poverty. For each dollar spent on various aid measures, fifteen are spent on military equipment. Eradicating poverty is the world's greatest moral, political and economical challenge and a prerequisite for peace, stability and sustainable development. The challenge becomes even greater when we look at the problems the world faces. More than a billion people live in extreme poverty and tens of thousands of children die each day from preventable


illnesses. Each day, thousands of people are infected with HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

## **Human Rights Violations**

Arms are oftentimes sold to regimes that violate human rights and thus enable them to oppress population and to keep on committing human rights abuses. It is a long recognized fact that there is a connection between respect for human rights and peaceful social development. Substantial and gross violations of human rights may pose a threat to both national and international stability.

## **Dictatorships**

Arms exports should not be permitted to countries where citizens have no say in the matter and may even be imprisoned if they try to make their voices heard. Exporting war materials to dictatorships legitimizes the dictatorship and undermines efforts to achieve democratic progress.

 Share of international arms exports (%) 2010–2014



Data: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

# LICENCE PROCESS AND REGULATIONS

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## Slovakia

In Slovakia, the system of arms control is divided into two areas: the control of military material export (including small and conventional weapons) and the control of exports of dual-use material. The categorization of weapons and the export rules follow international and European law.

The overall authority is the Ministry of Trade (MoT). According to the law regulating the arms trade, the MoT issues both the permission

to open an arms trade business, as well as licences to export military material. Prior to issuing a permission to open the business or to issue a licence, the MoT has a duty to ask for an opinion from the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the National Security Agency, and the Slovak Information Service. Their opinions are advisory, but only a negative statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is binding.



## Sweden

In theory, Swedish arms export is forbidden by law. However, exemptions from this law can be granted if the specific export is deemed to be beneficial to the security interests of Sweden. So many exemptions are granted every year that Sweden consistently places itself among the top exporters of arms per capita in the world.

The exemptions are granted by a government agency called the National Inspectorate of Strategic Products (NISIP). The agency has several criteria to consider when reviewing a request for arms exports. The agency is not supposed to allow export to countries that are involved (or might soon be involved) in armed

conflicts, or any countries where there occur serious human rights abuses. The agency is also supposed to deny exemptions if the arms export would be contrary to Swedish foreign policy or the EU Common Position.

However, in reality, these guidelines are so open to interpretation that arms export is regularly allowed to countries involved in armed conflicts (e.g. USA and India) or human rights abuses (e.g. Saudi Arabia and UAE).

All the cases and decisions of NISIP are kept confidential and secret, as it is believed that making the information public would harm the Swedish arms industry in its trade negotiations.

## Czech Republic

The licensing process of the Czech arms trade contains two steps: firstly, the trading subject has to ask for permission to start the business – i.e. for contacting partners, preparing a portfolio, etc. After that, for each planned contract the subject has to obtain a particular licence. Permissions and licences are granted, or rejected, by the Department of Industry

and Trade, respectively by its Licensing Administration. Opinions of other departments – the Interior Department, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Foreign Affairs – are also required. The Department of Foreign Affairs has to consider the impact of any arms sale on human rights in the country of the recipient, and has the power of veto.

## European Union – Common Position

One of the most important documents for the EU is the Council [Common Position 2008/944/CFSP](#) (the EU Common Position for short). This document defines 8 criteria which every EU member has to take into consideration before

granting any arms export licence. However, this document has no legal force and the final decision is left to the member states alone. Moreover, in some cases the criteria themselves can contradict one another as regards arms exports.

### Criteria:

- 1 Respect for the international obligations and commitments of member states, in particular the sanctions adopted by the United Nations Security Council or the European Union, agreements on non-proliferation and other subjects, as well as other international obligations.
- 2 Respect for human rights in the country of final destination as well as respect by that country of international humanitarian law.
- 3 Internal situation in the country of final destination, as a function of the existence of tensions or armed conflicts.
- 4 Preservation of regional peace, security and stability.
- 5 National security of member states and of territories whose external relations are the responsibility of a member state as well as that of friendly and allied countries.
- 6 Behaviour of the buyer country with regard to the international community, in particular its attitude to terrorism, the nature of its alliances and its respect for international law.
- 7 Existence of a risk that the military technology or equipment will be diverted within the buyer country or re-exported under undesirable conditions.
- 8 Compatibility of the exports of the military technology or equipment with the technical and economic capacity of the recipient country, taking into account the desirability that states should meet their legitimate security and defence needs with the least diversion of human and economic resources for armaments.

## Arms Trade Treaty

A lot of hopes and effort were given to the preparation of the global [Arms Trade Treaty](#) (ATT). It was the first global treaty setting common rules for regulating trade of conventional weapons. ATT came into force at the end of 2014 when 130 countries signed it and 61 ratified it. Its pos-

itive effect on reducing unregulated arms trade has been questioned since the world's biggest arms exporters already follow even stricter regulations on the arms trade (EU members), have not ratified it yet (USA), or have not even signed the treaty yet (Russia, China).





# CASE STUDIES

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## **Czech Handguns for Egyptian Police Forces**

In 2013, the Czech Republic allowed export of more than 50,000 handguns to Egyptian police. This happened after the coup d'état that overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood's leader Morsi and established military rule, brutally suppressing its opposition. State violence escalated in August 2013, when hundreds of demonstrators were killed by Egyptian security forces during a single day. In reaction to this massacre, the European Union decided to stop arms exports to the Egyptian regime. The Czech Republic also joined this "embargo" and interrupted the delivery of the handguns mentioned above. However, in the spring of 2014, the Czech Republic resumed delivery and moreover, granted an additional 25,000 handguns and 10 million units of ammunition. The issue is that the human rights

[More info here](#)

## **Is Slovakia Still Shipping Equipment to Sudan?**

Slovak weapons have been found in many of the worst conflicts of the past, such as in Sri Lanka or Congo. In early 2014 four Mil Mi-171E helicopters, camouflaged in military colors, were shipped from a Slovak airport in Poprad to Sudan. The helicopters originally came from Russia. As they lacked armament, they were labelled for "civilian purposes," and the licensing

[More info here](#)

situation has not improved since the embargo was established the previous year, on the contrary, it has gotten much worse. According to numerous international human rights organizations, Egypt has witnessed greater state-inflicted violence and attacks on human rights than ever before. Even the Czech Republic was aware of the brutal Egyptian repression, when it signed – in a very hypocritical move – a joint declaration of the UN Human Rights Council expressing concern about police brutality and acknowledging its responsibility for deaths of protesters. The joint declaration was signed nearly at the same time that the Czech Republic granted additional arms exports to the Egyptian police. These examples show that Czech arms exports have nothing to do with "fighting against terrorism", or the "protection of tourists", as it is usually stated. Rather, it is just a business.

process did not have to take place. A poor investigation was made into the case and no details were disclosed, the issue was closed as a civil business, despite the military camouflage livery. Due to the great ease with which armament can be installed, these helicopters belong to the category of dual use material, which makes them a matter for the EU licensing process like any other weapons or military material. This process was probably skipped in this case.

# DATA RESOURCES

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In order to better understand the development of the arms trade and to support your argument, you need reliable data. There are various sources of data, and each of them has its own specifics.

In general, we can divide data into three main types: data on arms deals that have already taken place and are annually published in governmental reports; information on ongoing deals or negotiations which occasionally (but not every time!) appear in news headlines; and lastly reports from conflict zones in cases when weapons have been spotted and identified as used by parties of the conflict.

## Annual Country Reports and the EU Report

Following the common European policy, governments of each EU country publish their own report on the arms trade. In most cases, there are available data on the value of exported and imported military material, and also on the number of granted licences, listed by the countries of the final recipient

(when talking about export) or the country of origin (when talking about import). Unfortunately, these reports lack specific information about the types of weapons traded, as they only mention quite broad categories such as “military material”. Therefore it is almost impossible to find out which particular types of weapons were exported and in which amount.

Country	Czech Republic	Slovakia	Sweden	EU
Publisher	Department of Trade and Industry <a href="#">Download here</a>	Department of Economy <a href="#">Download here</a>	Government & Department of Foreign Affairs <a href="#">Download here</a>	Council of the EU <a href="#">Download here</a>
Usual time of publishing	Summer of the next year	April of the next year	March of the next year	End of the next year

Another useful source of data is the UN Register of Conventional Arms. This online database provides information on exports and imports of conventional weapons (tanks, artillery, etc.) and also of SALW (i.e. small arms and light weapons such as handguns, machine guns, etc.). In some cases, information on certain types of traded weapons is available there.

Website: [www.un-register.org](http://www.un-register.org)

### **Mainstream Media, Specialised Military Media, and Blogs**

Unofficial sources of information on arms exports can also be occasionally found in mainstream as well as [specialised military media](#). Such information usually deals with exports that are planned or are about to be realised soon. If you would like to find out which weapons have been used in conflicts, consult reports by organisations such as

SIPRI – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute provides not only raw data on arms trade, military expenditures or arms trade embargoes, but publishes also a great number of their own studies and research papers. The institute provides also a database with all national arms trade reports from the EU.

Website: <http://www.sipri.org>

[Small Arms Survey](#), which provides “on-site” research, or blogs like “[The Rogue Adventurer](#)“, which analyses video footage and photos from conflict zones, trying to identify the type and origin of weapons spotted there. It is useful to make a weekly search on all articles dealing with arms trade and store them in some form of bibliographical database such as [Zotero](#), or online bookmark tools such as [Diigo](#) or [Pocket](#).



# FREQUENT ARGUMENTS OF MILITARY FANS IN SUPPORT OF ARMS TRADE

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**“We sell weapons to protect people. There is something like a right to self-defense!”**

According to many studies, weapon supplies fuel and prolong conflicts and, instead of solving them, cause a lot more suffering. One of the problems is that even EU countries export arms to dictatorial regimes where these arms serve not to protect the people, but to oppress them.

[More info here](#)

**“If we don’t sell arms, somebody else will. Why not us?”**

If we consider exporting arms to dictatorial regimes to be a “bad thing”, the fact that someone else will do it cannot serve us an an excuse. Firstly, we are responsible for our own behavior before we criticize others. We should aim at higher moral standards for ourselves, as well as for the entire international community.

EU states publish records of refused licences and, as a rule, other states within the EU respect this and do not issue licences for these particular clients either. This process is set precisely to avoid situations of arms business competition among the different EU states. We can also set positive examples!

**“Unemployment is rising. Why risk jobs of our people?”**

Jobs in arms manufacturing are a bad investment, not only from the human rights point of view, but even from an economic one as well. For the same investment, more than double the jobs would be created in other areas, such as public construction or education

[More info here](#)

## **“Why should we give up our profits?”**

The global arms industry is heavily subsidized by public money, be it in the case of direct investment or shareholding, in tax holidays, in helping the promotion of products to foreign customers, or in form of publicly-financed research, but you can be sure the profits are not public, but remain private. Therefore, a question arises whether we are to heavily subsidize the industry from tax-payers money. Is this the business we all want to enhance? In any case, there are many other types of goods that we can produce without our direct support for killing.

## **“If they want to kill each other, they will find a way.”**

Obviously, with a gun it becomes much easier to kill other people. In conflict zones, we should rather support negotiations and long-term projects, not the killing.

## **“We don’t kill, we only sell arms.”**

We are responsible for choosing to whom we sell arms. We have to be aware that selling arms to dictatorial regimes involves great risks that the arms will be used in serious human rights violations. We must not give up our basic ethics for the sake of profits. How can we say we are a peaceful society, and at the same time support oppression in other countries?



# READY FOR ACTION

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There are many possibilities for creative public events. It is often good to choose a date of a public event that can bring attention to your action, such as a large arms trade convention, a visit of a foreign official on the occasion of concluding a new arms deal, or a renowned security forum which is financed by arms business, or which

has a clear policy agenda. Don't hesitate to be straightforward or shocking; it is often difficult to get media attention and the stakes of the arms trade and the number of victims is high enough to be brave with your actions. The arms trade must be brought under control!

There are some movies that can be useful as an introduction into the topic, or they can shed some light on particular arms-trade related topics or on the consequences of unrestricted arms trade and business practices:

## **Lord of War (2005)**

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0399295/>

## **Making a Killing: Inside the International Arms Trade (2006)**

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0778772/>

## **Hamaabada / The Lab (2014)**

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2419246/>

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## THE SWEDISH PEACE AND ARBITRATION SOCIETY (SPAS)

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<http://www.svenskafreds.se/>

SPAS is the world's oldest and Scandinavia's largest peace organisation. It was formed in 1883 by the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Klas Pontus Arnoldson. The organisation is politically and religiously independent. SPAS is a non-profit organisation with approximately 7500 individual members.

The success story of our peace organisation is that of forming opinions together with other people, as well as influencing policymakers to make decisions in support of peace. We initiate debates and spread knowledge through seminars, articles, manifestations and letter-writing campaigns. We also support peace projects in different parts of the world and work together with international partners to achieve our goals.

Our major aims are to ease tensions, advocate peaceful conflict resolution, speed up disarmament, promote transformation of military resources into development and support democratisation. We believe that conflicts can be solved with peaceful means. The Stockholm Peace Society is a regional association within the SPAS.

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## HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE

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<http://www.ludskeprava.sk/>

Human Rights Institute is a group of human rights activists, who do campaigns and raise awareness on ongoing human rights issues and important causes in the world or in Slovakia and try to engage Slovak public to take an active part in human rights protection and promotion.

We focus on human rights violations abroad ("prisoners of conscience"), LGBT rights, women rights, economic, social and cultural rights, poverty, arms trade control, fight against (right-wing) extremism.

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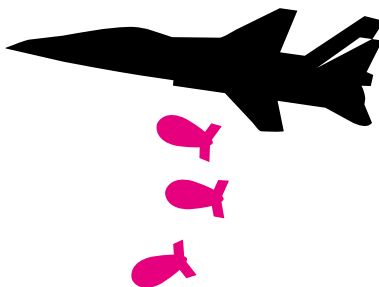
## NESEHNUTÍ

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<http://nesehnuti.cz/>

As a social and ecological non-governmental organisation, we work principally on the basis that ecological and social problems have shared causes and consequences which must be resolved. All our activities aim to show that social change based on respect for people, animals and nature is possible, and, most importantly, must be led from below. Therefore, we support people who are interested and engaged in what's happening around them and who consider responsibility for life on our planet as an integral part of their own freedom. We work independently of party and economic interests, using strictly non-violent means.

The antimilitaristic group "Arms, or Human Rights?" is part of NESEHNUTÍ, an NGO, and focuses on monitoring Czech arms exports. Its main aim is to prevent using Czech arms for human rights violations and for the support of repressive regimes. We are trying to get the handling of military material under public control.



## Arms Trade for Beginners

### A Handbook for Volunteers Campaigning Against the Arms Trade

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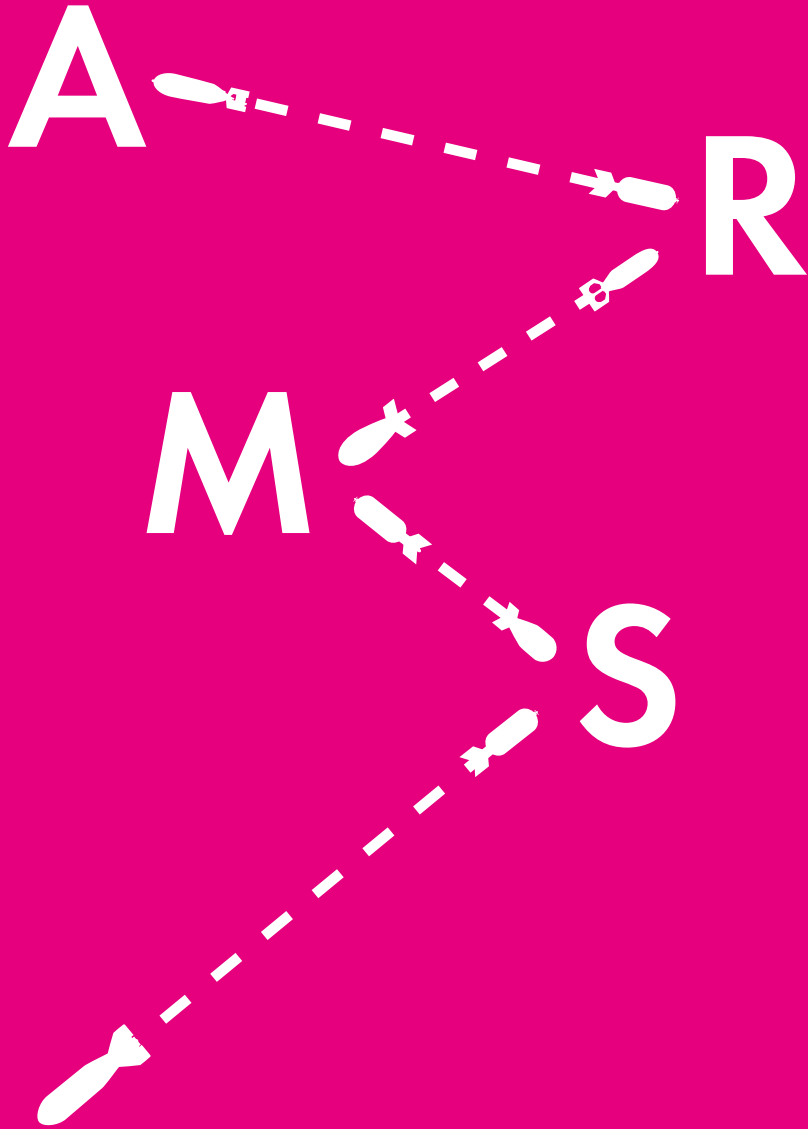
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