

SaferGlobe: Finland's Arms Exports Decreased, Export Licenses Worth 140 Million Euros to the United Arab Emirates

In 2020, Finland exported arms worth 160.9 million euros. This amount is the lowest since 2011 and marks a decline in exports by one-fifth compared to the previous two years. There was a decline in exports of both military vehicles and other military material as well as a minor decline in civilian arms. Despite the decline, the value of Finnish arms exports in 2020 is double that of 2002, the first year in SaferGlobe's dataset.

The value of civilian arms exports exceeded the value of military exports for the first time in SaferGlobe's 20-year statistics. Exports of civilian arms amounted to 81.1 million euros compared to military material's 79.9 million euros. Civilian arms are exported mainly for hunting and recreational shooting. Military material has been primarily developed for military use and includes weapons, vehicles, explosives, and protective materials, production technology, and software.

Finland's National Police Board, the authority responsible for civilian arms export licenses, was unable to provide export statistics to SaferGlobe. The reason given was that compiling the data would be too resource-intensive. 2020 was the third consecutive year that the National Police Board was unable to provide export information. Thus, the data on civilian weapons used in SaferGlobe's report is derived from the Finnish Customs online database.

The Ministry of Defence included declined applications of export licenses in their annual National Export Report of Finland for the first time, strengthening transparency in Finnish arms exports.

Finland granted exceptional licenses to the United Arab Emirates

In March 2020, the Government of Finland granted two export licenses to the United Arab Emirates for a total value of 139.3 million euros. Both licenses were for components of military vehicles. The value of these export licenses alone is close to Finland's annual exports in 2020. The licenses are exceptional not only in value but also in duration. The first license, granted for vehicle axles, is valid until the end of 2039 and the second license, for the export of gearboxes, until the end of 2050. On average, licenses issued by Finland between 2017–2020 have been valid for two years, with only one per cent of all licenses in the same period being granted for more than ten years.

The recipient of the vehicle components is the UAE firm Calidus LLC, which uses the components in its manufacture of military vehicles. Finland has no influence over where Calidus will sell the finished vehicles.

Finland decided to stop issuing new export licenses to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in 2018 due to the countries' involvement in the Yemeni Civil War. The UAE announced its withdrawal from Yemen in 2019 but in February 2020 made a statement that it would continue air operations in Yemen.

More detailed information can be found in the Finnish Arms Control Report published by SaferGlobe at <https://saferglobe.fi/armsreport/?lang=en-US>.

The report has been updated to include export statistics for 2020 from the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and Finnish Customs on 25th October 2021.

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