

Reporting to Cabinets and Parliaments on Arms Transfers: Evidence from TI

ATT Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR) — Agenda Item 4
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WHY PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING MATTERS ?

Accountability

- Public money; public name
- Primary mechanisms
- Scrutiny, challenge, course correction

Corruption risk

- Transparency vs diversion and misuse
- High values, secrecy, political connections, specialised expertise

ATT Article 13

- Annual reporting: authorized/actual exports & imports
- Quality of submissions → domestic reports
- Weak parliamentary reporting = weak ATT data



86%

of global **arms exports** originate from countries with **moderate** to **very high** corruption risk in the defence sector

49%

of global **arms imports** arrive in countries with **high** to **critical** corruption risk in the defence sector

WHAT TI-DS RESEARCH TELLS US ?

Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI)

- 200+ indicators across all areas of defence governance
- Transfer transparency consistently lowest globally
- Institutional default to secrecy vs genuine security sensitivity

Access to Information

- Security classification routinely used as blanket justification for non-disclosure
- Parliaments cannot scrutinise what they are not told

Corruption-fueled Diversion

- Institutional opacity is structural enabler
- Transparency failures → weapons in the wrong hands

WHAT SHOULD REPORTS CONTAIN ?

Transfer data by stage

- Authorisations, deliveries, brokering, transshipment—disaggregated

Recipient country and entity

- Who is receiving, through what channel, which armed force or security body

Weapons type and quantity

- Model-level specificity vs broad category

Financial values

- \$ or € amounts per deal or category—often withheld

Denial reasons

- Why transfers were refused, on what grounds—a transparency benchmark

End-use and oversight outcomes

- Post-shipment checks—rarely reported or even required

GOOD PRACTICE 1: PRIOR NOTIFICATION

The Principle

- Creates pre-transfer accountability vs post-hoc annual reporting
- Public notices: recipient, weapons type, quantities

The Model: US FMS

- Congress notified before major transfers proceed
- Civil society and independent experts can flag diversion risks before weapons ship

The Impact

- 2017: Security Assistance Monitor flagged \$6.15M M4 carbine sale to Honduran police
- Credible allegations of involvement in human rights abuses → restrictions on the sale

GOOD PRACTICE 2: DISAGGREGATION

The Principle

- Specificity makes reporting useful + basis for accountability
- Disaggregated, model-level data → independent analysis and diversion tracking

The Netherlands

- Monthly reports, country-level breakdown by transfer stage
- Authorisations, deliveries, brokering, transshipments reported separately
- Oversight recommendations can be escalated into binding parliamentary motions

The UK & Germany

- Named weapons systems with model numbers and quantities
- SIPRI relies on this data for its annual global arms transfer reports

GOOD PRACTICE 3: DENIAL REASONING

The Principle

- Publishing the specific criterion behind a refusal
- Creates traceable, auditable records over time

UK, Netherlands, Germany

- Reference the relevant EU Common Position criterion for each refusal
- Allows tracking of which destinations trigger which concerns

Why it Matters

- Denial transparency = accountability for decisions not to transfer
- ATT Article 7 requires risk assessment before approval—denial reporting is the evidence

PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

Structural Gaps

- Significant export volumes flow through licences with no per-transfer reporting
- Transparent about licences — opaque about actual flows

Aggregation

- Broad categories replace model-level specificity
- Rarely a security constraint — more often administrative inertia or industry accommodation
- Civil society is deprived of the data needed to monitor and hold governments to account

Regression

- Reporting quality erodes without a legal floor or sustained public scrutiny
- Cumulative effect of small administrative choices hollows out oversight infrastructure

IMPLICATIONS FOR ATT WGTR

Parliamentary reporting = ATT submissions

- Domestic reports are the upstream data source for ATT submissions
- Shared categories, timelines, definitions improve quality at both ends

Voluntary guidance on minimum content standards

- Disaggregation, weapons specificity, financial values, denial reasoning
- A framework for obligations already accepted

Civil society as a benchmarking partner

- Independent research can track reporting quality and identify gaps systematically
- Regular public benchmarking makes regression visible and creates pressure for improvement

THANK YOU

Questions?

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