

Significant Cases of Global Arms Trade

Who armed Libyas internal conflict?

Key Data:

Years: since 2011

Involved Countries: EU; NATO; Russia, Libya

Weapon Systems:

Arms Producers:

Perpetrators/Involved Parties:

Victims/Affected:

Libya has been a focal point for international arms trade, particularly due to its prolonged state of conflict and political instability. The European Union, NATO, Russia, and other countries have been implicated in the supply of armaments to different factions within the country. The implications of these actions have greatly affected the dynamics of the conflict and, by extension, the geopolitical landscape of the region.

The Libyan civil war began in 2011 with the uprising against the long-standing regime of Muammar Gaddafi. The conflict was characterised by the involvement of different local factions and international actors, each with their interests. NATO intervened in the conflict, implementing a no-fly zone and conducting airstrikes against Gaddafi's forces. NATO's involvement was contentious, with critics arguing that it exceeded its UN mandate to protect civilians and ultimately contributed to the destabilisation of Libya.

Following Gaddafi's overthrow, Libya descended into a complex and multi-faceted conflict involving numerous militias, the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), and the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Haftar. Various international actors have supplied weapons to these conflicting parties, further fueling the conflict.

Russia, for instance, has been accused of supplying weapons to Haftar's LNA, reportedly including advanced fighter aircraft and mercenaries from the Wagner Group, a Russian private military company. This support has bolstered Haftar's military capabilities and emboldened his efforts to take control of the entire country.

The European Union, while officially supporting the UN arms embargo on Libya, has struggled with internal divisions over the conflict. Some member states, such as France, have been accused of covertly supporting Haftar due to their strategic interests in the region. This has undermined the EU's role as a mediator in the conflict and its efforts to promote a political solution.

As for NATO, while it no longer has an active role in the conflict, its 2011 intervention has had long-term effects on the country. The destruction of Gaddafi's regime without a clear plan for the post-conflict transition left a power vacuum that has been filled by various militias. The widespread availability of weapons from Gaddafi's arsenals has also contributed to the ongoing instability.

The implications of the delivery of arms to Libya are vast. Firstly, it has exacerbated the conflict, leading to a greater loss of life and suffering for the Libyan people. Secondly, it has destabilised the broader region. The chaos in Libya has been exploited by extremist groups such as ISIS, which established a significant presence in the country. Moreover, the conflict has had significant spill-over effects in neighbouring countries, contributing to security issues in the Sahel region and creating a significant refugee crisis in the Mediterranean.

In conclusion, the supply of arms to different factions in Libya by various international actors has had significant implications for both the country and the wider region. While these actors have their strategic interests, their actions have ultimately served to prolong and intensify the conflict. For a peaceful resolution to be found, it is vital that all parties adhere to the UN arms embargo and work towards a political solution to the conflict. At the same time, more efforts need to be made to address the underlying issues that have contributed to Libya's instability, including political exclusion, economic inequality, and social division.

Additional Information / Sources

[1] "Fifteen were high-intensity armed conflicts (with 1000–9999 conflict-related deaths): Mexico, Nigeria, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, South Sudan, the Philip-pines, India, Myanmar, Cameroon, Pakistan and Egypt."
URL: https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/yb20_summary_en_v2.pdf

[2] "expenditure, international arms transfers, arms production, nuclear forces, armed conflicts and multilateral peace operations with state-of-the-art analysis of important aspects of arms control, peace and international security."
URL: https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/sipri_yb21_summary_en_v2_0.pdf

[3] "See full list on amnesty.org See full list on amnesty.org In 2014-2018, these were the top clients of the top 5 exporters: 1. US: Saudi Arabia (22% of total exports), Australia (7.7%), UAE (6.7%) 2. Russia: India (27%), China (14%), Algeria (14%) 3. France: Egypt (28%), India (9.8%) Saudi Arabia (7.4%) 4. Germany: South Korea (19%) Greece (10%) Israel (8.3%) 5. China: Pakistan (37%), Bangladesh (16%), Algeria (... [See full list on amnesty.org](#))
URL: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/08/killer-facts-2019-the-scale-of-the-global-arms-trade/>

[4] "Dec 7, 2020 · This is according to new data released today by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). New data from SIPRI's Arms Industry Database shows that arms sales by the world's 25 largest arms-producing and military services companies (arms companies) totalled US\$361 billion in 2019."
URL: <https://sipri.org/media/press-release/2020/global-arms-industry-sales-top-25-companies-85-cent-big-players-active-global-south>

[5] "Three trends remained a cause for concern in 2021: (a) the growing Chinese–United States rivalry, combined with an increasingly assertive Chinese foreign policy; (b) the various threats and conflicts falling within the broad terrorism/counterterrorism rubric, involving both states and non-state actors; and (c) the ongoing impact of weather and c..."
URL: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/yb22_summary_en_v2.pdf

[7] "The workbook at the link below contains official data on the financial value of states' arms exports. Government and industry data on the financial value of national arms exports, 1994-2020. The data is taken from reports by, direct quotes from or direct communication with, governments or official industry bodies."

URL: <https://www.sipri.org/databases/financial-value-global-arms-trade>

[8] "To summarize, the law of armed conflict: is a branch of international law; governs relations between States during armed conflicts; also applies to fighting within the State; is intended to reduce as much as possible the suffering, loss and damage caused by war;"

URL: https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/law1_final.pdf

[9] "May 21, 2019 · Relatively new arms manufacturers especially in South Africa and Egypt sell arms to undocumented users within the continent affected by a myriad of armed conflicts the arms trade is a necessary component for survival of legal governments, but the designated end user of all guns sold determines the ability of rogue individuals and ..."

URL: <https://ivypanda.com/essays/the-arms-industry-and-international-security-essay/>

Author

Edited vom 30.05.2023 /
