

**Joint Statement:
10 Years After Council Conclusions, EU States Must Finally Halt Arms
Transfers To Egypt And Uphold Accountability**

Brussels, 28 June 2023 - The signatory organizations denounce the role of [EU-manufactured](#) arms systems in internal repression and human rights violations in Egypt, and call on the competent EU institutions to join our request for transparency and a halt to arms transfers to Egypt addressed at all EU member states, in line with criterion No.2.2 of the Common Position 2008/944/CFSP.

The misuse of arms by state actors, including their use in committing human rights violations, is [recognized](#) by the United Nations as a violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. Over the past decade, the improper use of heavy and light weapons by Egyptian security forces has been documented consistently in the context of episodes of internal repression, police brutality, torture, and extrajudicial killings.

In 2013, in the aftermath of the [massacre](#) of Rabaa Al-Adawiya and Al Nahda, the Council of the European Union issued [Conclusions](#) regarding the state of human rights in Egypt in which Member States unanimously agreed to suspend the export to Egypt of any equipment that could be used for internal repression.

The relevance of such a provision is proven by the fact that the massacres of Al-Nahda and Rabaa Al-Adawiya on 14 August 2013, in which more than a thousand unarmed demonstrators lost their lives at the hands of Egyptian security forces, witnessed the use of French-supplied Sherpa armored vehicles, Czech-produced CZ Scorpion Evo, and Italian Beretta 70/90 rifles by Egyptian military personnel and security forces forcibly dispersing civilians.

Nonetheless, several member states, including Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, The [Netherlands](#), Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, and [Spain](#) flouted this suspension advanced by the 2013 Conclusions, and continued (or soon resumed) shipping military equipment to Egypt.

A [report](#) published by EgyptWide in 2023- almost ten years after the Council Conclusions- found consistent evidence of the use of small arms and light weapons manufactured in Italy and exported to Egypt, in human rights violations committed by state actors.

The erosion of principles of proportionality and accountability in the use of force has been progressively enshrined in policy during the past decades and under el Sisi's presidency, while the liberalization of the use of firearms and armored personnel carrier vehicles in street operations and protest management has been fueled by the proliferation of weapons.

The growing availability of arms systems (including surveillance, military, and dual-use technology) and their unaccountable use represent a threat to the rights to life, freedom from torture, freedom of assembly and expression for all persons living in Egypt, and jeopardize peace and security at the regional level.

EU Member States which have been exporting weapons and surveillance technology, including dual-use technology, to Egypt in the past years must not deflect accountability for the use of such materials in human rights violations.

Policies such as those enshrined in the Arms Trade Treaty (2013) and the EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP explicitly recognize the nexus between arms proliferation and the deterioration of peace, human security, and human rights. Both contain provisions to regulate the international trade and transfer of arms which subordinate such activities to exporting states' responsibility to uphold and protect human rights and peace internationally. Conversely, they forbid the supply of military material to countries where a risk exists that such material may be used for internal repression, human rights violations, or severe breaches of the Geneva Convention of 1949.

The ongoing sale and transfer of arms systems from EU Member States to Egypt further aggravates the use of lethal and disproportionate force against civilians, mass arbitrary arrests (with the incarceration of tens of thousands of arbitrarily detained critics between 2013 and 2019), extrajudicial executions, [hundreds](#) of enforced disappearances, and the systematic use of [torture](#). EU-manufactured arms, including small arms and light weapons, armored vehicles, tear gas, batons and surveillance technology, have been repeatedly used in human rights violations in Egypt, as documented by civil society organizations [EgyptWide](#), the [Egyptian Front for Human Rights](#), the [Fédération Internationale pour les Droits Humains](#). [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Amnesty International](#) also expressed concern for the risk that arms exported by EU Member States may fuel human rights abuses.

In light of the evidence presented, and the prominent denunciations advanced by competent [EU](#) and [UN](#) bodies, the role of EU Member States as providers of material for internal repression in Egypt is undeniable, and contradicts EU's commitment to support democracy and human rights in its external relations, thus, it compels all EU countries and institutions to take action for the protection of human rights in Egypt through the regulation of international arms transfers and sales in accordance with EU's founding principles as per the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

The signatory organizations call on:

1. EU Member States, to comply with their national and international obligations on the arms trade under the EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP and (where applicable) domestic legislation, halting all arms transfers to Egypt, and conducting a thorough review of the transparency mechanisms in force for ensuring accountability in the monitoring of arms transfers;
2. National Parliaments of EU Member States which have exported weapons to Egypt over the past ten years, to uphold transparency standards by creating ad hoc truth-finding bodies to investigate the misuse of such arms and their possible use in human rights violations in Egypt. We also call for the creation (or strengthening) of monitoring mechanisms to ensure transparency in the supply of military equipment, surveillance and dual use technology to third countries;

3. The European Parliament, to create an ad-hoc commission of inquiry under Article 226 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) to investigate maladministration and contraventions to the the Common Position 2008/944/CFSP by Member States which have been exporting arms systems to Egypt since the Common Position was first issued;
4. The EU Council, to adopt a Council Decision and the corresponding Council Regulation halting the sale, transfer or export of weapons, and other equipment that might be used for internal repression, from Member States to Egypt, in light of the concrete risk that they may be used in human rights violations.

Signatory organizations

1. ACAT-France
2. Andalus institute for tolerance and anti violence studies
3. ANKH Association
4. Archivio Disarmo
5. Asia Pacific Network of Environment Defenders
6. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
7. Citizens International
8. CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation
9. Committee for Justice
10. Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
11. Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR)
12. Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
13. EgyptWide for Human Rights
14. EuroMed Rights
15. Fédération internationale pour les droits humains (FIDH)
16. Fridays for future Chieri
17. Fridays For Future GOMA
18. Fridays For Future MAPA
19. Fridays For Future Indonesia
20. FridaysForFuture Italia
21. Fridays For Future Lebanon
22. Fridays For Future SWANA
23. Human Rights Watch (HRW)
24. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement

25. International Network of Liberal Women
26. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
27. MENA Rights Group
28. National Lawyers' Guild-San Francisco Bay Area chapter
29. New hope for poor
30. Osservatorio permanente sulle armi leggere (OPAL)
31. Progressives for Climate
32. Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)
33. People in Need
34. Refugees platform in Egypt (RPE)
35. Réseau Ouest Africain des Défenseurs des Droits Humains
36. Sierra Leone School Green Club
37. StationToStation2Agosto
38. Stop Wapenhandel
39. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)