CHAPTER 2: ARMS EXPORTS AND IMPORTS – ASSESSING 2020 ANNUAL REPORTS

2.1 – ANNUAL REPORTS ANALYSIS

Transparency in arms transfers is an essential component of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and fundamental to achieving its object and purpose. Timely, comprehensive and meaningfully transparent reporting facilitates confidence building, responsibility and cooperation by allowing States Parties and civil society to be certain that Treaty commitments have been respected. Information contained in States Parties’ annual reports can also help to inform licensing decisions and can be used to uncover where diversion may have taken place.

Article 13.3 of the ATT includes an obligation for all States Parties to submit an annual report on their authorized or actual arms exports and imports by 31 May each year. The submission of annual reports allows States Parties and all others interested in the ATT to be confident that Treaty commitments have been fulfilled.

The analysis of 2020 annual reports presented in this chapter examines compliance with Article 13.3 reporting obligations and assesses reporting that contributes to the transparency aims and objectives of the Treaty as well as to a higher standard of transparency. Overall, the analysis of 2020 annual reports illustrates that progress on effective and transparent reporting remains disappointing. While a group of States Parties have shown themselves to be committed to public reporting, the lack of effective reporting by many others is a matter of concern as reporting is vital to the implementation of the Treaty. In particular, the increasing use of confidential reporting threatens to undermine transparency in the global arms trade as well as States Parties’ commitments to the object and purpose of the Treaty.

KEY FINDINGS

- The declining compliance with ATT reporting obligations identified by the ATT Monitor over 2015–19 continued for 2020. The proportion of States Parties submitting annual reports declined from 82 per cent for 2015 to 57 per cent for 2020 while the increase in confidential reporting continued apace, with 30 per cent of 2020 reports kept confidential, compared to 21 per cent of 2019 reports.
- There was an increase in the number of reports submitted on time. Forty-six States Parties submitted their reports timely, compared to 34 in 2019.
- Sixty-seven per cent of publicly available 2020 reports contained descriptions of some or all transfers and 57 per cent of reports contained comments for some or all transfers.
- More States Parties are reporting disaggregated data. The percentage of annual reports that disaggregated all weapon types by importer or exporter rose from 67 per cent of 2015 reports to 82 per cent of 2020 reports. However, disaggregation by weapons categories and subcategories has fluctuated over time.
- Only 27 per cent of 2020 reports made public were sufficiently detailed and comprehensive to provide a meaningful level of transparency.
- Only 16 States Parties complied with Article 13.3 reporting obligations, provided information in annual reports that goes beyond the minimum information needed to contribute to the aims and objectives of the ATT in Article 1, and provided information that supports a higher standard of transparency.

**COMPLIANCE WITH ATT ARTICLE 13.3 REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

Article 13.3 of the ATT requires States Parties to submit an annual report on their arms exports and imports by 31 May. The ATT Monitor considers an annual report to be compliant with these requirements if it:

- Is submitted to the ATT Secretariat.
- Is submitted on time (within one week of the 31 May deadline).²
- Includes both exports and imports of conventional arms covered under Article 2.1 and/or relevant ‘nil’ reports indicating that no arms were transferred.

In total, 105 States Parties were required to submit an annual report on their imports and exports in 2020. Only 60 reports³ were submitted by the ATT Monitor’s cut-off date compared to 62 for 2019. This was a decline in the reporting rate from 64 per cent to 57 per cent, due partly to the fact that five out of the eight countries who were due to submit their first annual report in 2021, did not do so.⁴

**SUBMITTING REPORTS TO THE ATT SECRETARIAT**

The submission of annual reports for 2020 continued a long-term trend of decreasing transparency. At the most basic level of transparency, the proportion of States Parties that submitted an annual report has declined steadily – from 82 per cent for 2015 to 57 per cent for 2020 (Figure 2.1).⁵

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² To ensure it has adequate time for in-depth analysis of the reports, the ATT Secretariat includes for consideration reports submitted by States Parties up to seven days after the Treaty deadline, creating a cut-off date of 7 June.

³ Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, State of Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

⁴ Of the eight, Botswana, Guinea-Bissau, Lebanon, Mozambique and Suriname did not submit reports. Only Canada, Maldives and Palau did.

⁵ The proportions are not the same as published in previous editions of the ATT Monitor, as this year’s figure includes reports that were submitted late, sometimes years after the deadline.
As outlined in previous editions of the ATT Monitor Report, the main reason for the decline in reporting is that more recent States Parties have been much less likely to submit a report than those countries that ratified or acceded to the Treaty soon after it was negotiated.6

ATT Monitor analysis shows that:

- Forty-four States Parties that were required to submit a 2020 report did not do so.7
- Eight States Parties were required to submit a report for the first time for 2020. Of these, three submitted 8 and five did not submit.8
- Two States Parties improved their reporting and submitted a report for 2020 after not submitting a report for 2019, even though they had been required to.9
- Seven States Parties did not submit a report for 2020 even though they did submit a report for 2019.10

A group of 56 States Parties have submitted every annual report that was due,11 another group of 30 have not submitted any reports at all,12 and a further group of 19 have submitted reports unevenly.13

SUBMITTING REPORTS ON TIME

Forty-six States Parties (44 per cent) submitted their 2020 annual report on time.14 A further 14 submitted their reports between the Treaty deadline and the ATT Monitor’s cut-off date.15 The proportion of annual reports submitted on time has declined unevenly from 51 per cent for 2015 to 44 per cent for 2020. There was a marked decline in late reporting compared to 2019 reports, of which 28 (29 per cent) were submitted late. This may reflect the ‘pandemic effect’ on reporting that likely affected States Parties previously.16

REPORTING BOTH EXPORTS AND IMPORTS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS COVERED UNDER ARTICLE 2.1

Most publicly available 2020 annual reports contained transfer information on both imports and exports. However, Austria and the United Kingdom did not provide information on imports.

FULL COMPLIANCE WITH ARTICLE 13.3 REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Only 46 States Parties (44 per cent) fulfilled their reporting obligations for transfers that took place in 2020.

8 Canada, Maldives and Palau.
9 Botswana, Guinea Bissau, Lebanon, Mozambique and Suriname.
10 Barbados and Cameroon.
11 Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Republic of Moldova, Senegal and Uruguay.
12 Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, State of Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.
13 Bahamas, Belize, Botswana, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Dominica, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Iceland, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Seychelles, Suriname, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago and Zambia.
15 Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Palau, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, State of Palestine, Sweden and Switzerland.
16 States Parties that submitted late reports were Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, Cyprus, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Norway, Panama and United Kingdom. As the ATT Monitor sets a cut-off date of 1 February 2022 by which all reports need to be downloaded for analysis, any 2020 annual reports submitted after that date were not taken into account, including Madagascar and South Africa.
FULFILLING THE TRANSPARENCY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TREATY

Article 1 of the ATT establishes the object and purpose of the Treaty, which includes: “Promoting cooperation, transparency, and responsible action by States Parties in the international trade in conventional arms, thereby building confidence among States Parties.” Reporting is the primary tool at the disposal of States Parties for contributing to the transparency aims and objectives of Article 1. Without reporting, it is impossible for States Parties to have confidence that others are fulfilling their Treaty obligations. Transparency is thus an essential aspect of promoting international cooperation and responsible arms transfers.

The ATT Monitor considers that, to be meaningfully transparent and to contribute to the aims and objectives of the ATT, an annual report should at minimum:

1. Be submitted and made publicly available on the ATT Secretariat website.
2. Provide information that is disaggregated by weapon type.
3. Provide information that is disaggregated by importer/exporter.
4. Indicate whether transfer data concerns authorizations or actual transfers (or both).
5. Provide the number of units or financial value (or both) for each weapon type.

States Parties that submit ‘nil’ reports indicating that they did not import or export any arms also contribute to the transparency aims and objectives of the Treaty. Therefore, the ATT Monitor also considers an annual report to be meaningfully transparent if the State Party has clearly submitted a ‘nil’ report on exports or imports.

IDENTIFYING MEANINGFULLY TRANSPARENT ANNUAL REPORTS

Only 28 States Parties (27 per cent) met the above criteria and submitted 2020 reports that were meaningfully transparent. The percentage of meaningfully transparent reports has declined every year since reporting began, from 46 per cent for 2015 to 27 per cent for 2020 (see Figure 2.2).

FIGURE 2.2 – NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS DUE THAT ARE MEANINGFULLY TRANSPARENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of meaningfully transparent reports</th>
<th>Percentage of meaningfully transparent reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 An authorized export or import is one that has been approved by national authorities, while an actual export or import concerns the physical movement of weapons or a change in ownership. Authorizations are generally granted before the actual export takes place, sometimes years in advance. For more information, see WGTR (2019). ‘Reporting Authorized or Actual Exports and Imports of Conventional Arms under the ATT: Questions & Answers’. ATT/CSP5.WGTR/2019/CHAIR/533/Conf.Rep.Rev.1 https://bit.ly/3rHiE2k. pp. 11-12.
21 Argentina, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Palau, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
The decline in reporting noted in the previous section partly explains the decline in meaningfully transparent reporting but submitted reports have also become less transparent. An increasing proportion of States Parties have requested the ATT Secretariat not to publish their report on its website (See Figure 2.3).

Article 13 of the Treaty does not state that reports can be made confidential. Instead, it states that ‘Reports shall be made available and distributed to States Parties by the Secretariat’ without clarifying to whom. Only two reports (4 per cent) were confidential for 2015, the first year of reporting, compared to 18 (30 per cent) for 2020.

### FIGURE 2.3 – PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS DUE THAT ARE CONFIDENTIAL

- **2015**: 4
- **2016**: 7
- **2017**: 8
- **2018**: 17
- **2019**: 21
- **2020**: 30

Making annual reports confidential has gone from a highly exceptional practice to a common one.

- Four States Parties (Benin, Bulgaria, El Salvador and Panama) submitted a confidential report for 2020 after having allowed their 2019 report to be published.
- Eleven States Parties submitted confidential reports for 2020 as they had for 2019.
- Nine States Parties have only ever submitted confidential reports.

It is important that an annual report indicates whether the report records (a) transfers that actually took place or (b) authorizations for future transfers. Not all authorized exports or imports ultimately take place (orders may be cancelled or reduced) and, if they do, the articles may cross national borders a year or more after the authorization. Often there are discrepancies between reports produced by exporting and importing States Parties. Knowing what the reported data refers to with regard to actual or authorized transfers is an important element for explaining these.

- One State Party (Bosnia and Herzegovina) did not state in its report whether any of the data referred to authorizations or actual transfers.
- Five States Parties did not indicate in some parts of their report whether the data referred to an authorization or an actual transfer but did so in others. Two of them (Australia and Portugal) provided an indication for exports but not for imports.
- One State Party (Hungary) did not provide an indication for imports of armoured combat vehicles and some categories of small arms.
- Three States Parties (Finland, Germany and Norway) did not provide an indication for one category (respectively imports of ‘other’ small arms, of revolvers and self-loading pistols, and of rifles and carbines).

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24 Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Republic of North Macedonia and State of Palestine. The Maldives also submitted confidential reports for 2019 and 2020 but is not counted here as it was not required to submit a report for 2019.

25 Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Cameroon, Cyprus, Greece, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Nigeria and State of Palestine. These States Parties have either submitted confidential reports from the start, submitted a 2020 confidential report after having not previously submitted required reports, or in previous years either submitted a confidential report or did not submit a required report at all.

The ATT reporting template includes columns for States Parties to record the number of weapons imported or exported, or their financial value. Failure to do so clearly prevents the reader from understanding the magnitude of a transfer. For example, Belgium left blank the entry for units or financial value for its small arms imports, which it described as being ‘Benelli riot Guns’ from Italy to be used ‘by Belgian Defence forces’.

Three States Parties (Australia, Hungary, and Sweden) indicated that the number of units had been withheld and they did not provide a financial value and number for a small number of transfers, presumably in accordance with the provision in Article 13.3 that ‘reports may exclude commercially sensitive or national security information’. Nevertheless, whilst Hungary and Sweden specified this by checking the appropriate area of the reporting template, Australia did not, yet it described as ‘withheld’ the numbers of Harpoon and Sidewinder missiles it imported from the United States (it provided unit numbers for all other transfers). Sweden described as ‘classified’ the numbers it exported of RBS 70 missile systems (MANPADS), Carl Gustaf recoilless rifles, and of NLA and AT4 portable anti-tank missile launchers and rocket systems. Hungary described as ‘classified’ the number of Carl Gustaf recoilless rifles it imported from Sweden and of assault rifles it imported from the Czech Republic, with both transfers described as being for its defence forces. Hungary provided unit numbers for all other transfers. Since the Treaty allows States Parties to withhold some information for national security and/or commercial sensitivity reasons, Australia, Hungary and Sweden are assessed to have crossed the threshold for meaningfully transparent reporting, as they clearly indicated where such information was withheld.

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28 Hungary specified that the variant in question was the Carl Gustaf M4 recoilless rifle.

29 Australia and Hungary did though fail to meet the threshold for other reasons.
TEXTBOX 2.1: AGGREGATION IN ARMS TRANSFERS

One of the most significant ways in which publicly available reports do not meet the minimum criteria for meaningful transparency is through the aggregation of data. When data is aggregated excessively, the quantity, type or destination/origin of the weapons is obscured, and it becomes impossible to know what weapons were transferred to whom. In addition, aggregation makes it difficult or impossible to determine whether a State Party has abided by its Treaty commitments. Data aggregation was identified in nine of the publicly available 2020 reports (21 per cent). This is lower than for 2019 reports when aggregation was found in 13. This reduction between 2019 and 2020 is partly due to Italy having disaggregated all its data in its 2020 annual reports (of the others, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador did not submit a 2020 report while Monaco submitted a ‘nil’ report). Finland and Sweden included in their reports supplementary tables that aggregated data using different classification systems than the one used in the ATT reporting template. These tables provided additional transparency as Finland and Sweden also completed the relevant sections in the reporting template.

As is shown below, all of the aggregation in 2020 reports concerned transfers of small arms and light weapons.

One method used to aggregate data in the 2020 reports was to combine different weapons categories, which results in an obfuscation of the actual number of weapons transferred. For example, Austria reported the export to the United Kingdom of 106,084 items of ‘Small Arms (aggregated) as well as Light Weapons (aggregated)’. Australia reported the export of ‘Aggregated Small Arms and Light Weapons’, and Belgium reported the export of EUR 2,953,979 worth of ‘Small Arms (aggregated)’.

A second method used to aggregate data was to combine exporters and importers. For example, Denmark reported the import of 6,961 rifles and carbines from ‘Multiple exporting states’, leaving the reader with no indication as to where they came from. In other cases, the exporters or importers may be mentioned individually while the volume of the category of arms transferred is combined, which prevents proper allocation of the number of arms to or from each destination. For example, Ireland reported the import of 185 revolvers and self-loading pistols from ‘Germany, Italy, Slovakia, United States, United Kingdom’; Jamaica reported the import of 8,331 revolvers and self-loading pistols from ‘Canada, Czech Republic, Panama and United States’; and Latvia reported the import of EUR 896,718 worth of rifles and carbines from ‘Austria, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, United States, Switzerland and United Kingdom’.

The picture, when it comes to disaggregation, is mixed over the 2015-20 period. The proportion of reports that disaggregated all weapon types by importer or exporter rose from 66 per cent of 2015 reports to 82 per cent of 2020 reports. However, the proportion of reports in which all transfers were disaggregated by weapon type and sub-category has fluctuated without an overall upward or downward trend.

TABLE 2.1 - PER CENT OF PUBLICLY AVAILABLE REPORTS (EXCLUDING ‘NIL’ AND EARLY SUBMISSIONS) THAT DISAGGREGATE DATA

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disaggregated by</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>importer or exporter</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaggregated by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weapon type</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every instance of data aggregation identified by the ATT Monitor in 2020 reports concerned transfers involving small arms and light weapons (SALW). Aggregation was identified in 218 transfers, representing 9 per cent of all reported transfers for 2020. Of these, 178 were exports (11.9 per cent of all exports reported for 2020) and 39 were imports (4.2 per cent of all imports). Overall, 46.8 per cent of aggregated transfers were in the ‘Small Arms and Light Weapons (aggregated)’ category, 36.7 per cent in the ‘Small Arms (aggregated)’ category and 4.6 per cent in the ‘Light Weapons (aggregated)’ category. The remaining instances of aggregation, representing 11.9 per cent of all aggregated transfers, occurred within weapon sub-categories, as illustrated by the examples above. These sub-categories were all small arms and include ‘Revolvers and self-loading pistols’, ‘Rifles & carbines’, ‘Others (in small arms)’ and ‘Assault Rifles’.30

30 Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Jamaica, Latvia and Luxembourg.
FULL COMPLIANCE WITH ARTICLE 13.3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND FULFILMENT OF THE TRANSPARENCY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TREATY

Only 25 States Parties (24 per cent) required to submit a report for 2020 produced one that was on time, was publicly available and was meaningfully transparent.\(^{31}\)

A HIGHER STANDARD OF TRANSPARENCY

The previous sections describe the minimum standard for compliance with the Treaty and the threshold for meaningfully transparent annual reports that support and contribute to its aims and objectives. However, States Parties are encouraged to provide more information that contributes to an even higher standard of transparency. This is supported by several of the Treaty’s provisions. Article 5.3, for instance, encourages States Parties to apply the Treaty provisions, including on reporting, to the broadest range of conventional arms.\(^{32}\) Here, States Parties could include information on a wider range of items in their reports than those set out in the eight weapons categories defined in Article 2.\(^{33}\) Reports could include information on, for example, ammunition, munitions and parts (including exports or imports of complete weapons that have been disassembled and are transferred as parts).\(^{34}\) The ‘FAQ-type guidance document on annual reporting obligations’ endorsed by the ATT Conference of States Parties\(^{35}\) encourages States Parties to provide as much additional information as possible, even in the absence of a requirement to do so.

The ATT Monitor considers an annual report to include information that contributes to a higher standard of transparency if States Parties do at least one of the following:

1. Include descriptions of reported transfers that provide details on the make, model and/or calibre of transferred conventional arms.
2. Include comments on reported transfers that provide details on the nature of the transfer, including end-use/end-user information.
3. Include ‘0’, ‘nil’, ‘/’ or any other indication that no transfers were made in relevant weapons categories and sub-categories.
4. Clearly indicate whether commercially sensitive or national security information was withheld or not, and, if it was, what information was withheld.
5. Include information reported in voluntary national categories that includes arms categories covered by Article 2.1 but not explicitly highlighted in the reporting templates (shotguns, etc.).\(^{36}\)
6. Include information reported in voluntary national categories that includes arms categories not covered by Article 2.1 (ammunition, parts and components, gas-powered firearms, etc.).
7. Include any kind of additional information, including national reports and detailed tables.
8. Include national definitions of reported categories of conventional arms.

31 Three of the 28 reports that were assessed as being meaningfully transparent, however, also submitted their annual reports late (Chile, Luxembourg and Monaco).
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Though Article 5.3 states that ‘Each State Party is encouraged to apply the provisions of this Treaty to the broadest range of conventional arms’, the ATT reporting template does not include some weapons that are covered by the Treaty (for example, shotguns are not mentioned explicitly). The template has sub-categories for ‘other’ small arms and/or light weapons, and a section for ‘Voluntary National Categories’ of weapons, both of which allow a State Party to report on a wider range of arms exports or imports. States Parties can also use their own national reporting format.
The ATT reporting template used by the great majority of States Parties provides space for the reporting of broad categories of weapons (for example 'Battle Tanks' or 'Warships'). It also includes a column in which States Parties can add a more detailed description that provides much more information on exactly what was supplied. Eight States Parties included descriptions for all the transfers they reported, and a further 20 included descriptions for some transfers. Thus, 67 per cent of publicly available 2020 reports contained descriptions of some or all transfers. Seventeen States Parties have a consistent record of including descriptions of at least some of their transfers in every report that they were required to submit.

The ATT reporting template also includes a column for States Parties to provide comments on the context of a transfer. For example, in its 2020 report, Hungary stated that imports of 200 portable anti-tank guns described as being 'RPG-75 launching tubes' that were 'for deactivation, collections & exhibitions'. Five 2020 annual reports included a comment on every transfer, and a further 19 included comments on some transfers. Thus, 57 per cent of reports contained comments for some or all transfers. Nine States Parties have a consistent record of having included comments on at least some of their transfers in every report they were required to submit.

Definitively stating that there were no transfers of a particular type of weapon provides more transparency than leaving a blank space in sections of a report. Article 13.3 of the Treaty allows a State Party to 'exclude commercially sensitive or national security information' from its reports. Thus, if parts of a report are left blank it is impossible to tell whether there were no transfers or whether information has been withheld. Fourteen 2020 reports indicated that no transfers of specific weapon types had been reported by using symbols like '0', '/', or '-'. Nine States have made such definitive statements in every report they were required to submit.

The ATT reporting template includes an option to tick a box to indicate whether or not information has been withheld for commercial or national security reasons. Thirty-two States Parties checked “yes” or “no” to indicate whether or not information was withheld in their 2020 reports (76 per cent of all publicly available reports). Eight States Parties provided no indication. Twenty-three States Parties indicated whether or not information was withheld in every report they were required to submit.

37 Chile, Finland, France, Mexico, Montenegro, Peru, Republic of Korea and Slovenia.
38 Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden and United Kingdom.
39 Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom.
40 Chile, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Mexico and Peru.
41 Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and United Kingdom.
42 Canada, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Romania, Slovenia, Switzerland and United Kingdom.
44 Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Montenegro, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden.
45 Estonia, France, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden.
46 Argentina, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland.
47 Australia, Austria, France, Netherlands, Palau, Poland, Spain and United Kingdom.
48 Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia and Sweden.
BRITISH ROYAL MARINES HELOCASTING INTO SEA IN NORTH DEVON, UK.

CREDIT: © MOD CROWN / LAC PALMER
VOLUNTARY NATIONAL CATEGORIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some States Parties include in their annual reports information covering a wider range of conventional arms than specified in the ATT reporting template. This information is provided under the ‘other’ sub-categories for both small arms and light weapons, in a section for ‘Voluntary National Categories’ of weapons, or in additional supplementary tables of data.

- Eleven States Parties included data on arms that are covered within the scope of Article 3 of the Treaty but are not explicitly specified in the reporting template. For example, Jamaica, Mexico and New Zealand reported transfers of shotguns and Finland and Montenegro reported transfers of grenade launchers.
- Seven States Parties reported upon a wider range of military equipment. For example, Norway provided information on its transfers of ammunition.
- Four States Parties (Australia, Finland, Japan and Sweden) provided supplementary tables containing additional data that employed a different weapons classification system than the one in the reporting template.
- Two States Parties (Poland and Serbia) reported transfers of weapons described as being ‘other’, but provided no additional information on what they were.

States Parties have the opportunity in the reporting template to provide details on weapons categories used in reporting that differ from those used in the template. New Zealand and Sweden utilized this section of the reporting template for their 2020 report.

MOST TRANSPARENT REPORTS

No State Party submitting a 2020 annual report used all the transparency mechanisms outlined in this chapter. 16 States Parties complied with Article 13.3 reporting obligations, provided information that goes beyond the minimum information needed to contribute to the aims and objectives of the ATT in Article 1, and provided information that supports a higher standard of transparency. Of these, three States Parties (Mexico, Montenegro and Peru) provided the most information that supports a higher standard of transparency. All three fully disaggregated the data for each transfer by weapon type, importer and exporter, number of units and actual or authorized transfers. Mexico and Peru included comments for all transfers, while Montenegro included comments on most.

The three reports provided descriptions for all listed transfers. In addition, Montenegro indicated when no transfer had taken place for a particular weapon category.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the 2020 annual reports shows that more can be done to improve transparency in the global arms trade. Positively there is a group of 25 States Parties that complied with Article 13.3 reporting requirements and fulfilled the transparency aims and objectives of the Treaty by submitting a public report and providing information that is disaggregated by weapon type and by importer/ exporter, indicating whether transfers were authorized or actual (or both) and providing the number of units or financial value (or both) for each weapon type. In addition, as this chapter shows, there is a group of States Parties that have consistently included descriptions and comments for some or all their arms transfers, contributing in this way to a higher standard of transparency.

However, there is also a declining proportion of States Parties that have not submitted an annual report at all or that chose to make them confidential. Forty-four States Parties that were required to submit a 2020 report did not do so and 18 others opted to make their annual reports private. This is a concerning picture as annual reports are the most important means by which States Parties can build confidence that their arms-trade practices are consistent with all the obligations contained in the ATT. In order for annual reports to fulfil this role, their data must be comprehensive, detailed and publicly available.

Previous editions of the ATT Monitor have identified three possible barriers to States Parties submitting comprehensive and publicly available annual reports that support the object and purpose of the Treaty: capacity, national systems and political will. Priorities for international cooperation and assistance should be to encourage States Parties to meet their reporting obligations as well as to help those that lack capacity to build national systems needed to collect data on their arms transfers.
A FRENCH LECLERC BATTLE TANK DURING NATO EXERCISES IN LATVIA.

CREDIT: © NATO