

Press release

Arms deals underwritten without regard for ethics, research finds

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Research to be published this month has found that governments across Europe are underwriting arms deals without ethical controls. Researchers from the European Network Against Arms Trade (ENAAT) examined the figures, transparency and policy of 12 export credit agencies in 11 countries, including the Netherlands. Export credit agencies are set up by governments to provide public loans to support sales to countries of risk. However, researchers found that 20 – 30% of export credits go to support arms sales, often to poor or conflict-ridden countries.

Wendela de Vries of the Dutch Campaign Against Arms Trade says: "It is shocking that public money is used to support arms exports. We all know that arms sales goes at the expense of other public expenditures. An export credit insurance for Dutch naval vessels to Indonesia last year meant that an export of medical equipment for an Indonesian hospital could not be supported with an export credit any more."

ENAAT has called for an EU ban on export credits for arms sales. The call comes as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) holds its annual meeting today in Paris. Wendela de Vries: "Export credits backing military sales often lead to more debts for poor countries. Debts that are made for inproductive goods, goods that increase the risk of instability, armed conflict and human rights violations. Export credit agencies should stop spending public money on arms trade support." (3)

Notes

1. The European Network Against Arms Trade (ENAAT) is a network of researchers and campaigners from 13 European countries. In the Netherlands the Dutch Campaign Against Arms Trade is ENAAT member.
2. The United Nations Development Report 2003 described the arms trade as a major barrier to combating poverty.
3. See for the summary of the report www.stopwapenhandel.org or www.enaat.org

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