

United Nations
Register of Conventional Arms

Guidelines for Reporting
International Transfers



Questions & Answers



Department for Disarmament Affairs
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Note:

This document can also be found as Part II of the “2004 Information Booklet” which is available in English, French and Spanish on our website:

<http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html>

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Basic structure of the Register

1. What type of activities involving conventional arms are to be reported?

Resolutions 46/36 L and 47/52 L call upon Member States to provide data annually on the number of items in seven defined categories of conventional arms imported into or exported from their territory. The resolutions also invite Member States to provide available background information regarding their military holdings, procurement through national production and relevant policies. Furthermore, Member States are encouraged to inform the Secretary-General of their national arms import and export policies, legislation and administrative procedures both on authorization of arms transfers and prevention of illicit transfers.

2. What type of conventional arms is to be reported in the Register?

Part I, section B, lists and defines the seven categories of equipment on which States are requested to supply data to the Register. The categories are: battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles and missile launchers.

3. What is the exact meaning of “calendar year”?

Each Member State is requested to provide data on an annual basis regarding exports from and imports into their territory during the previous calendar year. For example, the data on exports and imports submitted to the Register by a Member State by 31 May 2004 would actually contain information for the previous calendar year, which is 2003.

4. Are States requested to report all types of arms transfers, including orders and deliveries?

The Register is to include only data on the number of items in the specified categories of equipment imported into and exported from the territory of States in the previous calendar year. States are to report only those transfers which they consider to have been effected during that reporting year, in conformity with the State's national criteria used to determine when a transfer takes effect.

Categories of equipment

5. Will States have to report the transfer of trainer aircraft?

Yes, in the event these trainer aircraft are “designed, equipped or modified to engage targets by employing guided missiles, unguided rockets, bombs, guns, cannons, or other weapons of destruction”. Primary trainers with none of the above characteristics should not be reported.

6. How are States to determine which transfers of missiles and missile launchers are to be reported?

If a missile launcher is an integral component of an item of equipment in Categories I to VI, it need not be reported separately in Category VII: missiles and missile launchers. Only stand-alone (fixed or mobile) missile launchers are reported separately in Category VII. Missiles, however, are always reported in Category VII regardless of the category of the equipment which launches them. For example, if State A imports 20 Type NEPTUNE missiles: 10 for use by warships, 5 for use by stand-alone missile launchers, and 5 for use by combat aircraft, then all 20 missiles are still reported in Category VII.

7. Sub Category (b) of Category VII deals with Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS). What should be reported under this sub-Category?

For reporting purposes MANPADS are broadly defined as surface-to-air missile systems designed to be man-portable and carried and fired by a single individual and; other surface to air missile systems designed to be operated and fired by more than one individual acting as a crew and portable by several individuals. MANPADS should be reported if the MANPAD system is supplied as a complete unit, i.e. the missile and launcher/Grip Stock form an integral unit. In addition, individual launching mechanisms or grip-stocks should also be reported. Individual missiles, not supplied with a launching mechanism or grip stock need not be reported.

8. Under which category would a State report the transfer of one 210 mm multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) with 30 rockets which have a range of 30 kilometres?

The multiple-launch rocket system (MLRS) falls within the definition of Category III, large calibre artillery systems. However, the rockets should be reported in Category VII, missiles and missile launchers, because they have a range of at least 25 kilometres (see also explanatory note (d) on the standardized reporting form).

9. Will States consulting the Register be able to determine the numbers of missiles and missile launchers imported or exported by a specific country?

The number listed in Category VII indicates the total number of missiles and missile launchers combined. Therefore it is not possible, using the data in the Register alone, to determine their separate numbers unless the reporting State clarifies this in the "Remarks" column of the forms. In the case of MANPADS, however, and recognising their unique status in the Register, there may be an indication of the number of launching mechanisms or grip stocks if they are supplied and reported as separate items.

Example

State F has exported to State K six missile launchers type FLYER and 500 missiles type CATCH-22. The FLYER is a fixed ground-based launcher. The CATCH-22 is a surface-to-surface missile (SSM), has a range of 180 km, and is armed with a conventional warhead. The examples that follow illustrate how State F might report on that export, at different levels of transparency.

In Version 1 below, State F has aggregated the missile launchers and missiles, and reports 506 items. This version meets the reporting requirement of the Register.

Version 1

EXPORTS

Reports of international arms transfers

(According to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L) Reporting country: F

Calendar year: 2004

| <i>A</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>REMARKS</i> | |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Category (I-VII)</i> | <i>Final importer State(s)</i> | <i>Number of items</i> | <i>State of origin if not exporter</i> | <i>Intermediate location (if any)</i> | <i>Description of item</i> | <i>Comments on the transfer</i> |
| VII. Missiles and missile launchers | a) K b) | 506 | | | | |

In Version 2 below, State F has chosen to offer additional data, indicating in column C that the items are broken down into 6 missile launchers and 500 missiles. State F has used the "Remarks" column to identify the type of both the launcher and missile.

Version 2

EXPORTS

Report of international arms transfers

(According to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L) Reporting country: F

Calendar year: 2004

| <i>A</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>REMARKS</i> | |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>Category (I-VII)</i> | <i>Final importer State(s)</i> | <i>Number of items</i> | <i>State of origin if not exporter</i> | <i>Intermediate location (if any)</i> | <i>Description of item</i> | <i>Comments on the transfer</i> |
| VII. Missiles and missile Launchers | a) 1) K 2) K b) | 6 506 | | | 1) Launcher, Type FLYER 2) Missile, Type CATCH 22 | |

10. What about missile launchers on warships? Many ships covered by the Register have the capability to mount missile launchers. Should the transfer of this type of missile launcher be entered as a separate transfer under category VII?

No. All missile launchers mounted on all warships covered by the Register are considered to be an integral component of the warship itself and thus are not to be registered as separate transfers of Category VII equipment. However, in reporting on transfers of warships, States may, if they wish to clarify this point, indicate in the "Remarks" column of the form if and how many missile launchers are mounted on the reported warship(s). If, however, a State exports or imports ship-based missile launchers separately from the ship (as is often the case in order to upgrade or modernize ships that are already in the inventory of a navy), these launchers would not be considered an integral part of the ship and would, thus, be reported under Category VII of the Register.

11. What about fast attack craft with a standard displacement of less than 750 tonnes equipped with missile launchers with a capability of delivering a missile beyond 25 kilometres? Should the launchers be reported under the missile Category VII?

No. The definition of warships was expanded by the 1992 Panel of Experts to cover warships below the 750 tonnes threshold if they carried missiles and launchers capable of delivering a warhead to a range of more than 25 kilometres. The attack craft should be reported under Category VI warships; the launchers need not be reported.

Example

State B exported to State J in 2004 the last two of an order for eight Hermes Class fast attack craft of 400 metric tonnes displacement. The ships are equipped with two twin missile launchers capable of delivering a missile to a range of 35 kilometres. The stock of missiles per ship has already been supplied with the previous ship deliveries prior to 2004. The ships are also equipped with a 40 mm gun.

EXPORTS

Reports of international arms transfers

(According to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L) Reporting country: B

Calendar year: 2004

| A Category (I-VII) | B Final importer State(s) | C Number of items | D State of origin if not exporter | E Intermediate location (if any) | REMARKS | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | Description of item | Comments on the transfer |
| VI. Warships | J | 2 | | | Hermes Class, 400 tonne fast attack craft. See Note 1. | |

Note 1: The ships are equipped with two twin missile launchers.

12. In the definition of Category VII, missiles and missile launchers, “ground-to-air missiles” are excluded and are not required to be reported. Does this mean that surface-to-air missiles mounted on ships are not covered by the Register?

“Ground-to-air” refers only to those surface-to-air missiles which are mounted on fixed land sites or on wheeled or tracked mobile launchers. Therefore, surface-to-air missiles mounted on ships are covered by the Register (see also question 10).

13. Are States asked to report the export or import of components used in the assembly, co-production or upgrading of items associated with the seven categories covered by the Register?

No. The Register only records transfers of complete equipment, as defined in the seven categories. If a component is imported by a State which then uses this component to produce and export a complete equipment covered by the Register, the equipment should be reported.

14. Equipment is sometimes exported/imported complete but in disassembled components (known as “kits”). Should these be reported to the Register?

Strictly speaking, the import and export of these kits need not be reported as a transfer; although States may do so if they wish, making clear that it is a disassembled kit. Another option is for the importing State to supply background information on the equipment as procurement from national production once the equipment is assembled on its territory.

15. How shall items exported by a State other than the State of origin be reported?

They should be reported on the export form, indicating the state of origin in column D of the standardized form.

16. How should the transfers of equipment to an intermediate location be reported?

If, for example, State A transfers air-to-air missiles to State B for installation on combat aircraft to be exported to State C, State A should report the export of missiles to State C and declare in column E of the form that State B is the intermediate location.

Example

In 2004, State D exported to State C 72 air-to-air missiles (AAM), type GOAL-104A, and 72 air-to-surface missiles (ASM), type STRIKE-S22, both with a range of 36 km. State C installed these missiles on the F-19B multi-role fighter aircraft, and then exported them to State Y in 2004.

Missiles from D to C

EXPORTS

Reports of international arms transfers

(According to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L) Reporting country: D

Calendar year: 2004

| A Category (I-VII) | B Final importer State(s) | C Number of items | D State of origin if not exporter | E Intermediate location (if any) | REMARKS | |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | | Description of item | Comments on the transfer |
| VII. Missiles and missile launchers | a) 1) Y | 72 | | C for re-export to Y | | |
| | b) 2) Y | 72 | | | | |

Missiles from C to Y as part of combat aircraft export

EXPORTS

Reports of international arms transfers

(According to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L) Reporting country: C

Calendar year: 2004

| A Category (I-VII) | B Final State(s) | C Number of items | D State of origin if not exporter | E Intermediate location (if any) | REMARKS | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | | | | | Description of Item | Comments on the transfer |
| VII. Missiles and missile Launchers | a) 1) Y | 72 | D | | 1) AAM, type GOAL-104A 2) ASM, type STRIKE-S22 See Note 1. | |
| | b) 2) Y | 72 | D | | | |

Note 1: In this case State C chooses to supply additional data on the equipment in the remarks column.

17. Should the transfer of second-hand equipment be reported?

Yes. All transfers relating to equipment included in the seven categories should be reported regardless of whether it is new or second-hand equipment.

18. Which State is to report the transfer of an item which was co-produced by three countries?

The transfer should be reported by the final exporting State of the complete equipment. Information concerning the co-production of the item could be given in column D and the "Remarks" section of the standardized form.

19. Are transfers of small arms and light weapons to be reported to the Register?

The 2003 Group of Governmental Experts agreed that interested Member States, if they wish to do so, could include transfers of small arms and light weapons in their annual report to the Register, using definitions and reporting methods they deem appropriate, and as part of additional background information.

Defining an international transfer

20. What is the definition of a transfer?

Agreement on a common definition of a transfer is complicated by differing national practices regarding implementation of rules, regulations and procedures for exports and imports. Therefore, the description of a transfer contained in the report of the 1992 Panel and reaffirmed by the 1994, 1997 and 2000 Groups of Experts remains the guideline for reporting transfers (see A/ 49/316, para. 42). Accordingly, international arms transfers involve, in addition to the physical movement of equipment into or from national territory, the transfer of title to and control over the equipment.

21. Can a transfer of arms occur without the physical movement of equipment across State borders?

Yes. A transfer of arms could occur when title and control of equipment belonging to State A positioned overseas is transferred to the host State (State B); OR title and control over equipment is transferred to another State (State C) but the equipment remains on the host State's (State B's) territory. For example, suppose a battalion equipped with battle tanks (Category I) from State A is stationed in State B. When its mission is complete, the Government of State A agrees to sell the tanks to State B. When State B assumes the title and control of the tanks, both States would report this transaction as a transfer covered by the Register. The same reporting rule could apply if the tanks in question had been stored by State A in State B as opposed to being in the hands of an active military force as described above. In these cases the determining factor is title and control, not geographic location, nor whether or not they are under the control of armed forces.

22. Must all equipment covered by the Register which moves across international borders be reported?

No. In the above example, if State A reinforces its battalion by shipping 20 additional tanks of its own, this is not an export (or import) since the shipment does not involve transfer of title or control of the equipment. Similarly, if these 20 tanks are being shipped to State B for the purpose of pre-positioning and remain under the control of State A, they are not reported as an export or import.

23. How is the date of export or import determined?

Each State will determine this date based on its national criteria and determine when a transfer becomes effective. States are invited to indicate such national criteria when submitting their export and import data to the Register. However, the precise date of the transfer does not have to be reported; only that it took place within the calendar year in question.

24. What if items covered by the Register are shipped from State A in 2004 but do not arrive at their destination in State B until 2005? In which year are they to be reported?

If the exporting State A maintains title and control over the equipment until it arrives in State B both States A and B will report the transfer as occurring in the year 2005. However, if title and control are assumed by State B in State A's territory prior to shipment both States will report the transfer as occurring in 2004.

Utilization of reporting forms

25. What is the purpose of the national criteria on transfers in the revised format of the reporting forms?

The 1997 Group of Experts concluded that to facilitate the clarity of submissions, Member States should be encouraged to explain their national criteria for defining a transfer in their annual reports. Explanatory notes on the back of the reporting forms under footnote "f" provide a way of indicating the criteria a State uses in determining when a transfer takes effect.

26. What is the national point of contact?

The 2003 Group of Experts concluded that Member States should designate an official point of contact for Governments on matters directly connected with the Register and that details of the contact point should be sent with the annual report on the understanding that this information will be held by the UN Secretariat and provided on request to Governments only. Furthermore, the Secretariat will maintain an updated list of national points of contact and circulate it to all Member States.

27. What if a State, using the standardized reporting form, submits data on equipment that does not fall under the definition for the categories? For example, suppose a State reports that it exported 30 ground-to-air missiles (specifically excluded from Category VII) or missiles with a range less than the reporting criteria of at least 25 kilometres.

Data submitted by a State using the format of the standardized form will be entered in the Register as submitted, even if it includes equipment outside the seven categories. However, in reporting it must be made clear that the equipment falls outside the definitions.

28. What if a State, after evaluating its exports and imports of conventional arms, determines that it has none which fit the criteria for reporting?

States in this situation are invited to submit a report to the Register clearly stating that no exports or imports have taken place in any of the seven categories during the previous year. Indeed, many States that had neither imported nor exported equipment covered by the Register have submitted “nil” reports. The submission of a blank form without any clarification cannot be assumed to be a “nil” report. The 2000 and 2003 Group of Experts reaffirmed the importance of participation in the Register through the provision of “nil” reports, where applicable. It concluded that such reporting was important in order to provide as complete a picture as possible of the transactions in equipment covered by the Register.

29. Are States requested to submit details on the designation, model or type of the transferred weapons?

The number of participating States using the “Remarks” column in the reporting format to provide designations and descriptions of equipment transferred has increased over the twelve years of reporting. The “Remarks” column was designed by the 1992 Panel to aid the understanding of international transfers by providing the opportunity, if States so wished, to report the designation, type or model of the equipment being transferred. The 1992 Panel also recommended that this column could also be used to provide additional clarification of transfers, such as if the equipment were obsolete or the result of co-production. The 2000 Group of Experts reaffirmed the view that use of the “Remarks” column helped in understanding the data submitted and added qualitatively to the data and information in the Register and encouraged States in a position to do so to provide such information.

30. What is meant by the term “available background information”, which is referred to in paragraph 10 of resolution 46/36 L?

Pursuant to resolutions 46/36 L and 47/52 L, Member States are invited to submit available background information on military holdings, procurement through national production, and relevant policies. The term “available” indicates that no special reports need to be prepared for submission to the Register. Rather, States are invited to submit those documents generated by their respective Governments during the reporting year on military holdings (for example, number and type of items of equipment in active and reserve units, in storage, etc.), the number and type of items of equipment produced within the State, and any information which makes a State’s policies regarding its production, acquisition and transfers of conventional armaments more transparent.

31. What format should be used for submitting background information?

The background information may be submitted in any form deemed appropriate by a State. The Department for Disarmament Affairs maintains an index of the background information submitted, by country, date and title. States should assign titles to their submissions.

Administration of the Register

32. When should the data and information, including background information, be submitted to the United Nations?

States are asked to submit the requested data and information by 31 May annually. For example, data for calendar year 2004 should be submitted by 31 May 2005. Late submissions will be issued as addendums to the Secretary-General’s annual report. The data and information submitted will

become an integral part of the Register. The returns should be sent to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations Headquarters, Room 3170, New York, NY 10017.

33. What should a State do if, after submitting information for a certain calendar year, it determines that the information was incomplete or contained a technical error?

Returns from previous years show that among the numerous items of data submitted for the Register, a small number of technical errors or omissions have occurred which States have sought to clarify. In such instances, States should provide written information referring to the item in question. There is no cut-off date for such corrections, although they should be submitted as early as possible in order to enable the Secretariat to process them before publication of the annual report of the Secretary-General. Otherwise, corrections would be issued as corrigendum to the Secretary-General's annual report.

34. What happens to the arms transfer data and the background information once they are submitted?

The Department for Disarmament Affairs keeps a file of the data and information in printed form as submitted by Member States and enters the data in a computerized database. Any State may request the data, by disk or printed copy, at any time. The information will be made public in the Secretary-General's annual report to the General Assembly. The background information will be indexed and filed in the Department for Disarmament Affairs. States providing data on military holdings and procurement through national production may request that the data not be published in the annual report.

35. Will the general public have access to the submitted information?

The Secretary-General's annual report on the Register will be made available to the general public after it is submitted to the General Assembly. Furthermore, as a means of improving access to the Register through the use of modern means of communication, the annual report of the Secretary-General can be accessed through the Internet by visiting the UN home page (<http://www.un.org>) and clicking on "Conventional Arms, Register of" in the Site Index under alphabet C or by directly accessing the home page of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Department for Disarmament Affairs (<http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html>). As recommended by the 2000 and 2003 Group of Experts, DDA is in the process of further improving and strengthening its website on creating a separate home page for the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

36. If a State has a question on the Register and its implementation, how can it contact the Department for Disarmament Affairs in New York?

Through Mr. Nazir Kamal at fax number (212) 963-3689 or at his e-mail address: kamaln@un.org. Submissions by Member States to the Register can also be copied directly to Mr. Kamal.



ANNEX-I: Standardized reporting forms for the Register (export and import)



Standardized form for reporting international transfers of conventional arms (exports)^a

EXPORTS

Report of international conventional arms transfers

(according to United Nations General Assembly resolutions 46/36 L and 58/54)

Reporting country: _____

National point of contact: _____
(Organization, Division/Section, telephone, fax, e-mail)
(FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY)

Calendar year: _____

| A | B | C | D ^b | E ^b | REMARKS ^c | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | | Description of item | Comments on the transfer |
| Category (I-VII) | Final importer State(s) | Number of items | State of origin (if not exporter) | Intermediate location (if any) | | |
| I. Battle tanks | | | | | | |
| II. Armoured combat vehicles | | | | | | |
| III. Large-calibre artillery systems | | | | | | |
| IV. Combat aircraft | | | | | | |
| V. Attack helicopters | | | | | | |
| VI. Warships | | | | | | |
| VII. Missiles and a) missile launchers ^d b) | | | | | | |

National criteria on transfers:

^{a b c d} See explanatory notes.

The nature of information provided should be indicated in accordance with explanatory notes e and f.

