

Massive German arms exports in 2022

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Between January 1 and December 22, 2022, the German ruling coalition approved arms exports totaling upwards of 8.35 billion euros. While final figures are pending, this is already the second-highest figure in the history of the Federal Republic.

Only the arms exports for 2021, at some 9.35 billion euros, were higher. The biggest contribution to this total came from arms deliveries to the brutal Egyptian regime of al-Sisi, which alone amounted to 4.34 billion. The Grand Coalition under Angela Merkel approved this before handing over power to the current government.

The near-record exports of 2022 under the coalition government consisting of the Social Democrats (SPD), the Greens and the Free Democrats (FDP), carried out with the backing of the opposition, exemplifies the continuation of the systematic and frenetic drive to war. It underscores Germany's aggressive role in the NATO proxy war in Ukraine against Russia. Ukraine received a greater portion of heavy weapons and military equipment than any other country, totaling about 2.24 billion euros.

Since the Ukraine conflict began nearly a year ago, Germany has flooded the country with weapons. The German government's ever-expanding official list of delivered "military support" already includes thousands of RPGs, 100,000 hand grenades, 30 Gepard anti-aircraft tanks, 14 Panzerhaubitzen 2000 systems, five multiple rocket launchers and the Iris-T anti-aircraft system. There were further arms deliveries over the holidays—including the Bergepanzer 2 armored recovery vehicles, border control vehicles and ambulances.

In the new year, the German government intends to further expand arms deliveries. The list of military support currently "in preparation/in execution" already includes 36 items. In addition to more tanks, items listed include 26 loading-handling trucks, 18 RCH 155

wheeled self-propelled howitzers, 16 Zuzana self-propelled howitzers and 156,000 rounds of ammunition for 40mm grenade launchers. At the end of last week the German government also announced it will send "Marder" infantry tanks to Ukraine.

Arms deliveries are not limited to Ukraine. Ranking second for 2022 is the Netherlands, at 1.83 billion euros. The explanation given by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs is the carrying out of a "large-scale multi-year procurement project," including artillery ammunition of various calibers for ammunition depots as well as firing ranges.

The US follows in third place, receiving arms deliveries totaling 863.7 million euros, with the UK, at 453 million euros, in fourth place.

In fifth place is Hungary, which received arms worth 249.2 million euros. The country, ruled by fascistic Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has received massive arms deliveries from Germany over the past three years. The Hungarian armed forces are known for their brutal crackdown on refugees fleeing imperialist wars in the Middle East and Africa and trying to reach the European Union via the Balkans, which border Hungary.

Among the top 10 recipients of German arms are three other countries that are not members of NATO or the EU: Australia (196.1 million euros), Singapore (175.1 million euros) and South Korea (166.5 million euros). The Asia-Pacific region bears the stamp of the United States' war preparations against China. Australia and South Korea in particular are at the forefront of US war plans.

The massive arms deliveries to the world's war and crisis regions underscore the aggressiveness with which the ruling class is driving the return of German militarism.

Shortly after the start of the Ukraine war, Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) tossed overboard the specious

principle of not supplying heavy weapons to crisis regions, following in the footsteps of his predecessor. This was followed by the passage of “special assets” (Sondervermögen) for the Bundeswehr (German military) amounting to 100 billion euros—part of the largest rearmament program since the end of World War II.

Over the holidays, SPD leader Lars Klingbeil said the special assets had to be used at “record speed,” in part to implement major military projects. “We need a national pact for security: a large alliance of politics and industry so that Germany can defend itself sufficiently, fulfill our alliance obligations and at the same time deliver more weapons to Ukraine,” he told the *Böhme-Zeitung*.

With his war pact, Klingbeil is rolling out the red carpet for the German arms industry to organize the country’s rearmament and future arms exports. Some of Germany’s largest arms companies, including Rheinmetall, Thyssenkrupp, MTU and Heckler & Koch, already reaped massive profits in 2022. Düsseldorf-based arms manufacturer Rheinmetall announced plans to expand an ammunition production facility in Germany. Production could begin as early as mid-January.

Defense Committee Chair Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann (FDP) hailed these developments, telling the *Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa)*, “In view of the security situation, it is of immense importance that Germany, together with its NATO partners, become more independent in the production of ammunition.”

The Greens are particularly aggressive. Speaking to the *dpa*, Green Party Economy Minister Robert Habeck proclaimed, “Putin is losing this war on the battlefield.” He supported the provocative US plan to send Patriot missiles to Ukraine and announced further arms deliveries. “As for Germany,” he said, “We also have been supporting Ukraine with heavy weapons for months, and we’ll continue to do so.”

As late as the September 2021 federal election, the Green Party’s election posters were emblazoned with the hypocritical slogan: “No weapons and armaments to crisis regions.” In its election program, it ranted about a “more restrictive arms export policy.” Now the former “peace party” is doing everything in its power to further fuel the war in Ukraine.

The Left Party is playing a similar role. After the

arms exports for 2022 became known, individual representatives feigned opposition. In fact, however, leading Left Party politicians—first and foremost the prime minister of the state of Thuringia, Bodo Ramelow, and Berlin mayoral candidate Klaus Lederer—publicly support the war drive and the arms deliveries to Ukraine. The official site of the Left Party states: “The desire now to help Ukraine with arms deliveries is understandable.”



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