



Cessez d'alimenter la guerre

## **Whilst still in the midst of its controversial arms exports to the Yemen, France prepares to welcome one of the world's biggest arms fairs.**

**Paris, 4th June 2018 :**

**A few days before the opening of Eurosatory, the world's biggest international land and aerial defence and security fair which will be held from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in Paris. Eurosatory will welcome hundreds of arms dealers and official delegations, including countries currently under an arms embargo or mired in controversies. The aim of the fair is to present the latest innovations in military equipment. The organisation, Stop Fuelling War, together with other peace movements and NGOs, is opposed to this event and is underlining the dramatic impact that arms sales have on peace and human rights. France's arms exports to war-torn countries, notably the Yemen, is facing intense criticism.**

Rafales, warships, armoured vehicles, or embedded military systems : France is the world's third largest arms seller. Between 2013 and 2017, 42% of its exports went to the Middle East. We also find Nester's Leclerc tanks, Dassault's Mirage 2000-9, French-built corvettes by CMN in the Yemen, presumably being used in committing war crimes. Since March 2015, the war in Yemen has resulted in more than 10,000 dead and 3 million displaced people. Ravaged by famine and cholera, the country is, according to the UN, experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War.

Holly Spencer from Stop Fuelling War says that *« France is very discreet about its military exports – there is not even a parliamentary commission about arms exports, as exists in the United Kingdom. France allows states which bomb, starve or repress civilian populations to come and buy their armaments at Eurosatory. »*

In 2016, Eurosatory welcomed official delegations from Egypt, despite the country's massive repression by Al Sissi's regime against his opponents, journalists and homosexuals. Eurosatory also hosted Saudi Arabia, in spite of its bombing of Yemen, which resulted in the thousands of civilian deaths. PR China and Russia were also participants, despite the arms embargoes on these two states.

Holly Spencer : *« France continues to sell Rafales and corvettes to Egypt, despite the embargo demanded by the European Union since 2014. It doesn't respect its international commitments as far as arms monitoring is concerned. A recent study by Amnesty International and ACAT (Christian ONG working to defend human rights) consider, for example that the sale of armaments by France to combatants in the war in Yemen is probably against international law, since grave human rights violations have been committed. It's certainly true that in other places, such as in Sinai, where possible abuses have been committed by the Egyptian army, French armoured vehicles have been spotted on the ground. »*

In France, arms exports must be authorised by the government. However, according to the 2016 Report to Parliament on this subject, 4,454 export licences were granted and only 48 were refused ; in other words, an approval rate of nearly 99%. Neither Parliament nor civil society were involved in the vetting process. However, according to a Young survey on behalf of the organisation SumOfUs, 88% of French respondents believed that France must stop the export of arms to countries which may use them against civilian populations.

Holly Spencer : *« Arms sales are rarely discussed in France. Eurosatory is only the visible tip of the iceberg, a time when arms dealers are in the limelight. We think that it's an opportunity to question the size of the French arms trade, its dangers and the peaceful alternative solutions to resolve conflicts ».*

Stop Fuelling War will organise a number of events and activities around the week of Eurosatory.

**Press contact :** Holly Spencer +33 6 74 21 46 36 [noneurosatory2@gmail.com](mailto:noneurosatory2@gmail.com)