

Joint Press Release

Airbus: Human Rights under Attack

Dossier: Airbus profits from wars, human rights violations and militarized borders
Turkey flies Airbus A400Ms to Libya and Azerbaijan despite embargoes
Brazil's police shoots at residential areas from Airbus helicopters

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Ahead of tomorrow's Airbus AGM in Amsterdam, a new dossier published by urgewald (Germany), Stop Wapenhandel (Netherlands) and terre des hommes (Germany and Switzerland) shows the extent to which the company supports authoritarian and autocratic regimes with weapons systems and other arms products. These include fighter jets for the war in Yemen, military cargo aircrafts for Turkey, helicopters for the deadly operations of the Brazilian police, and military border-security systems for countries worldwide.

Link to the dossier: <https://urgewald.org/downloads/dossier-airbus-company-decline>

Doing business with autocrats

Various states in the Middle East, the world's most conflict-ridden region, are Airbus customers. In recent years, for example, Oman has received twelve Eurofighters co-produced by Airbus, Kuwait ordered 28 and Qatar 24 fighter jets. With support by Airbus, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were able to launch the FalconEye spy satellite. Together with the UAE company Atlas Telecom, Airbus intends to market communications equipment for the military and police in the Middle East.

Airbus delivered its A400M military transport aircraft to Turkey. Many indications suggest that the Erdogan government used the A400M aircraft last year for illegal arms shipments to war-torn Libya and to Azerbaijan - both countries are subject to arms embargoes. According to new research for this dossier, Turkey continues to use the aircraft at least for flights to Azerbaijan.

Niels Dubrow, Arms Campaigner at Urgewald, commented: *"With its arms exports, Airbus contributes to more causes of forced displacement. The management is always looking for new ways to supply countries in conflict regions with its weapons, as recently in the United Arab Emirates. **The governments of Germany, France and Spain as co-owners must intervene. Airbus must finally stop supplying weapons to ongoing war operations and regimes that violate human rights.**"*

Militarized borders made by Airbus

Airbus is market leader for "border security" products in Europe, where states greatly increased their budgets in this field following the large movements of refugees in 2015. Airbus helicopters are deployed by border forces in various EU countries as well as Ukraine and Belarus. Saudi Arabia paid around 2 billion euros for a "border security system".

For the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, Airbus delivered over a hundred helicopters to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Many people have died at this border because these security systems forced them to take dangerous routes through the desert.

Mark Akkerman, Researcher at Stop Wapenhandel, said: *"Airbus profits from its arms trade to war and conflict regions and at the same time from the states' walls-up policy against refugees. This is a cynical business strategy. **Airbus' management should be securing human lives, not borders.**"*

Helicopters for Brazil's war on drugs

Police and military in Brazil regularly use excessive force in residential areas as part of the war against drug gangs. Many of the operations are illegal. In 2019 alone, 6,375 people died as a result of police violence, many of them uninvolved children and teenagers. Airbus helicopters are regularly used for such operations, where people are shot and civilian buildings are riddled with bullets. Schools, kindergartens and health centers have to close for weeks because of the escalating violence. Schools are now installing signs on their roofs saying "School! Please don't shoot!".

Beat Wehrle, Board Member of terre des hommes Germany, said: *"As long as these brutal police operations and the related serious human rights violations do not stop and remain unpunished, Airbus should stop any delivery of helicopters to Brazilian security authorities. **Airbus must ensure that its helicopters do not endanger or kill innocent residents.**"*

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