



**GLOBAL
NET**

**STOP
THE
ARMS
TRADE**

**CASE 06 of the
GLOBAL NET – STOP THE ARMS TRADE (GN-STAT)**

**Murderous Walls – Profiteers of Isolation.
How corporations across the world make billions on arms
and border security technology**

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Introduction

"Border security" is the official term used to signify the efforts of states to seal themselves off from their neighbors. Border security installations and isolating measures are for example carried out when countries face real terrorist threats and want to protect themselves against them. Examples of this are African countries such as Kenya and Nigeria, where Islamist terrorist groups such as Al Shabab or Boko Haram have invaded to carry out bloody massacres of the civilian population, as has happened several times. Preventing these is a legitimate concern of states where democratic principles prevail.

The situation is different with efforts to seal off refugees fleeing from countries where violent repression, arbitrary governmental action or economic hardship are ubiquitous. This sealing off of borders is often accompanied by massive violations of human rights. This process is all the more depressing because the profiteers of this sealing off are in many cases the same people who share responsibility for causing hardship, misery and oppression by first supplying weapons, which are used to wage wars and silence calls for liberty.

Arms exports to crisis and war zones are an extremely lucrative business for arms-producing companies in the industrialized world. Usually with the approval of the respective government, arms companies supply war weapons to human rights violating or warring states in Africa, Asia or Latin America. In addition to the classic large weapon systems and small arms, special border-sealing technology is also exported.

After all, for perfect surveillance systems, military forces need biometrics (measurements of living beings, e.g. for facial recognition), ICT (information and communication technology), manned vehicles, ground and sea systems, ships, air systems such as helicopters, unmanned aircraft (usually surveillance drones) and military satellites, as well as physical infrastructure, support and other services. These technologies are used to threaten and shoot at countless people, to expel them from their homes, to monitor and intercept them at borders. Construction companies also benefit massively from the fortification of borders.

Directly at the border security installations, small arms (pistols, machine guns, assault rifles and sniper rifles) are often used by state security forces - such as the Border Patrol - against migrants. Military vehicles are used, among other things, to transport materials to the borders and to transport fugitives back to refugee camps, torture chambers, prisons or the desert.

Turning a double profit: exporting arms, turning away refugees

Particularly cynical is the fact that a large number of corporations all over the world even profit from business with death on two ends: On the one hand, they are the very ones who export weapons and technical know-how to bogus democrats, repressors and dictators and thus exacerbate conflicts. And on the other hand, they supply armaments, surveillance electronics or drone or satellite technology that seal off borders and prevent people from fleeing to a safe neighboring country.

For company examples, see INFOBOX 1 "List of selected companies that profit from isolation".

INFOBOX 1

List of selected companies, that profit from isolation

The list of companies can be split into four categories:

1) Large weapons systems and isolation technology

• Aeronautics Ltd. (Rafael) • Airbus Group SE • Andúril Industries • BAE Systems Plc • Elbit Systems • Leonardo SpA • FLIR Systems Inc. • General Atomics • General Dynamics Corporation • Harris Corporation • Hensoldt Holding • Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) • Israeli Weapons Industries Ltd. (IWI) • L-3 Technologies Inc. • Leidos Holdings Inc. • Lockheed Martin Corporation • Northrop Grumman Corporation • QinetiQ Group • Rafael Advanced Defense System Ltd • Raytheon (The Raytheon Company) • Rheinmetall AG • Rockwell Collins Inc. • Saab AB • Safran SA • Smiths Group • Textron Inc. • Thales Group etc.

2) Small arms and Light Weapons

• Beretta Holding • Colt Defence LLC • Fabrique Nationale Herstal • Jisrael Galili • Konzern Kalaschnikow (Ischmasch) • Heckler & Koch AG • SIG Sauer Group etc.

3) Military Vehicles

• numerous manufacturers of military vehicles, e.g. Mercedes-Benz Military (Daimler AG), Toyota etc.

4) Construction Companies

• numerous construction companies, e.g. Barnard Co., Fisher Sand & Gravel Company, SLSCo Ltd. etc.

These are mostly US, Israeli and European companies. For 2018, the renowned Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) lists the following manufacturers of major weapon systems in its global arms export ranking of the 100 arms-producing companies. For company examples related to CASE 06 of GLOBAL NET, see INFOBOX 2.

SIPRI Ranking of the Top-100 Arms Global Producers

Selection of companies, that also benefit from “border security” systems

SIPRI records only producers and exports of large weapons systems. Most of the manufacturers listed above can be found in the SIPRI ranking of the 100 largest weapons producers:

Rank 2018 / 2017	Company	Country	Arms Sales 2018 / 2017 in Million USD	Share of Arms Sales in Total sales
1 / 1	Lockheed Martin Corp.	USA	47.260 / 44.935	88 %
3 / 3	Northrop Grumman Corp.	USA	26.190 / 22.908	87 %
4 / 4	Raytheon	USA	23.400 / 22.570	87 %
5 / 6	General Dynamics Corp.	USA	22.000 / 19.969	61 %
6 / 5	BAE Systems	Großbritannien	21.210 / 22.384	95 %
7 / 7	Airbus Group	Trans-Europäisch	11.650 / 10.691	15 %
8 / 9	Leonardo	Italien	9820 / 9403	68 %
10 / 8	Thales	Frankreich	9470 / 9601	50 %
12 / 12	L3 Technologies	USA	8250 / 7936	81 %
16 / 19	Leidos	USA	5.000 / 4485	49 %
17 / 17	Harris Corp.	USA	4970 / 4557	73 %
22 / 26	Rheinmetall	Deutschland	3800 / 3652	52 %
27 / 22	Textron	USA	3500 / 4199	25 %
28 / 29	Elbit Systems	Israel	3500 / 3263	95 %
30 / 31	Saab	Schweden	3240 / 3092	85 %
31 / 34	Safran	Frankreich	3240 / 3107	13 %
37 / 45	General Atomics	USA	2750 / 2273	..
39 / 40	Israel Aerospace Industries	Israel	2650 / 2500	72 %
41 / 42	Rockwell Collins	USA	2630 / 2355	30 %
44 / 47	Rafael	Israel	2540 / 2236	98 %
77 / 76	Hensoldt	Deutschland	1240 / 1232	95 %
94 / 104	QinetiQ	Großbritannien	910 / 874	75 %

Notes: Chinese companies have not been included due to a lack of data.

.. = data not available

Quelle: „The SIPRI Top 100 arms-producing and military services companies in the world excluding China, 2018”, SIPRI Fact Sheet, Dezember 2019

Arguments of “Border Security” against Terrorists and Refugees

But how can such an inhuman policy of double profits even be publicly communicated as positive? In times of the "war on terror" proclaimed by the U.S. government after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, arms deliveries to crisis and war zones are in the vast majority of cases described as necessary to secure "border security" against "terrorists" or "extremists". In many cases, the definition of who is to be classified as a terrorist or extremist is based on the political views of those in power.

The military, managers of arms and construction companies, and politicians* also see the exports or their export licenses of border security installations with high-tech technology for sealing off as useful. They speak of the defense against criminal refugees who trade in drugs and weapons, to the omnipresent threat of terrorism.

The Victims of these policies of arms exports and isolation

The consequences of this arms export and isolationist policy are fatal. Year after year, large numbers of refugees - above all women with their children and the elderly - become victims of the use of weapons of war from the industrialized world. Many of them die of emaciation during their flight on their way through inhospitable climatic regions. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) records 33,686 deaths among migrants worldwide between 2014 and 2019¹.

Refugees who hope to reach Saudi Arabia from East African countries via the Horn of Africa in order to continue their flight via the Arabian Peninsula to Europe have hardly any chance to leave the African continent due to the Saudi border security, as of the human rights organization Amnesty International has repeatedly pointed out. Countless people who nevertheless dare to flee drown or die of thirst.

The situation in Israel is different: here, sophisticated electronic surveillance systems prevent Palestinian demonstrators from even coming close to Israeli territory, as for example in Gaza. On Israel's border with Lebanon and Syria, the Israeli government argues the electronic border security is an effective means of preventing the infiltration of fighters from the Shiite Hezbollah.

But this purpose is being questioned by opposition groups in Israel. They point out that surveillance measures at the border fence to Gaza and the West Bank are primarily directed against Palestinian youth demonstrating against Israel's occupation policy and against harassment by Israeli security forces at the border security installations, as was the case in April and May 2018 on the border to Gaza, when, according to Israeli human rights groups, more than 60 demonstrators were shot dead.

The attempts of many refugees to cross the border between the USA and Mexico have failed. At the crossings they are usually arrested by the Border Patrol, taken to prison or sent back². If they take the detour over open border sections, the desert with scorching heat and certain death by thirst awaits them³. Civilian victim organizations⁴ set up water

¹ Migration Data Portal (17.03.2020). Migrant Deaths and Disappearances. *Migration Data Portal* [Database]. Archived from the original on November 7th, 2020, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20201107200940/https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migrant-deaths-and-disappearances>

² American Civil Liberties Union (Version: 14.11.2020). *Ice and Border Patrol Abuses*. Retrieved Nov. 14th, 2020 from): https://www.aclu.org/search/%20?f%5B0%5D=field_issues%3A272 (On Nov. 14th, 2020 the organization records 696 cases of police abuse)

³ Shivone, G. (n.d.). Death as "deterrence": the desert as a weapon. *Alliance for Global Justice*. Retrieved Oct. 10th, 2020 from <https://afgj.org/death-as-deterrence-the-desert-as-a-weapon>

⁴ Devereaux, R. (04.05.2019) Bodies in the borderlands. *The Intercept*. Retrieved Oct. 12th, 2020 from <https://theintercept.com/2019/05/04/no-more-deaths-scott-warren-migrants-border-arizona/>

canisters and provisions, take care of the injured. Often this assistance represents a violation of the immigration law, which is punishable by imprisonment.⁵ They recover the dead and identify them⁶, if possible, and ensure that the remains are transferred to relatives back home. This can take years.

Or, as happened in Algeria, migrants are forced to be transported back into the desert in thousands of vehicles. In the Sahara, the largest desert in the world, fugitives face death of thirst. Those who succeed in reaching the African Mediterranean coast and who dare to cross to Europe on unsafe ships must fear the capsizing of the completely overcrowded boats. The Mediterranean has long since become the deadliest maritime coffin in the world.

Meanwhile, the rich industrialized countries are investing immense financial resources to perfectly seal themselves off. The borders of the fortress Europe have shifted to the north of Africa. The European Union has long been investing billions directly in the Maghreb in order to intercept as many refugees as possible in Africa. Human rights are being massively violated and national and international refugee conventions are being undermined.

There are many examples like these. They happen every day, especially in Africa, Asia and America. In many cases, the actions of state authorities are also contrary to law and order.

Case 06 of the Global Net – Stop the Arms Trade (GN-STAT)

Our authors of Case 06 of the GN-STAT use selected case studies to document how corporations profit from arms supplies and from the business of sealing off of borders. Pars pro toto they show in several publication steps what happens at the following borders all over the world:

- around Saudi Arabia,
- around Israel,
- between the USA and Mexico
- and in the Maghreb (in northern Africa).

Further examples of deadly isolation will follow.

A voice to the victims – a name and face to the perpetrators

With this case 06 of GLOBAL NET we give the victims a voice and a name and face to perpetrators through perpetrator profiles. We successively create company profiles in order to expose the companies involved for what they are: purely profit-oriented, unscrupulously acting arms, vehicle or construction companies.

⁵Associated Press (02.04.2006). Volunteers fight arrests for aiding illegals. *Desert News*. Retrieved April 2018 from <https://www.deseret.com/2006/4/2/19946256/volunteers-fight-arrests-for-aiding-illegals>

⁶Verini, J. (18.08.2020). How US policy turned the Sonoran desert into a graveyard for migrants. *New York Times*. Retrieved October 10th, 2020 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/magazine/border-crossing.html>

What can you do?

But what are the concrete paths of action with which you can actively counteract the profiteers of isolation? What can you do?

You can...

- You can get the topic on the agenda by informing others and contribute to existing as well as founding your own strategies against these practices
- Participate in critical shareholder organizations of arms companies, such as Airbus N.V. or Rheinmetall AG, or with vehicle companies, such as Daimler AG, because of their continuous deliveries of Mercedes military vehicles to crisis and war zones;
- co-financing our criminal charges, which we file, for example, in cases of illegal trade in war weapons or surveillance material, as we have already done successfully with Heckler & Koch and SIG Sauer (see CASE 02 and CASE 04 of the GN-STAT)
- participate in the GLOBAL NET - STOP THE ARMS TRADE: through membership of the Arms Information Centre, through - tax-deductible - financial contributions (because our worldwide researches is expensive), through own research on border security installations (extend existing reports in CASE 06 or point out new cases of border security) through travel reports, films and photos from crisis regions or by editing or translating existing text passages into other languages.

We in the team of authors are looking forward to your feedback, your tips, cooperation and support. The more we are, the better we can give a voice to the victims and a name and face to the perpetrators.

Sincerely,

Jürgen Grässlin, Wolfgang Landgraaber und Maria-Eugenia Lüttmann-Valencia