



## **MENA ranks top for 'riskiest' nations receiving US weapons due to 'corruption', 'instability', 'human rights abuses'**

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The CATO Institute's latest Arms Sales Risk Index has ranked Middle East and North African countries at the top for the "riskiest" nations receiving the largest US arms sales.

The Washington DC think tank concluded in their 2021 report that Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt obtained the largest weapon sales from the US despite a high risk of arms being used to undermine social stability and human rights.

The research group used "risk vectors" including a country's level of corruption, instability, treatment of people, and the level of conflict to determine the consequences involved in trading arms to different nations.

Countries were ranked between 1 (lowest risk) and 100 (the highest risk).



Saudi Arabia ranked 71 and has received \$26.89 billion dollars in arms sales from the US from 2009 to 2020. The kingdom, by far, acquired the largest amount of weaponry from its American ally despite a poor human rights record and allegations of extrajudicial killings.

Egypt scored 78 and has received \$8.5 million in US arms sales from 2009 to 2020. Under President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, there has been a growing prevalence of extra-legal killings, mass arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearance in the North African country, according to Human Rights Watch.

Iraq stood at 89 in the Index. The US has sold around \$10.5 billion dollars to the nation plagued by corruption and violence in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion.

"By continuing to sell weapons to extremely fragile states and countries with authoritarian governments, the US contributes to rising levels of violence and oppression around the world," said the report.

The CATO criticised President Joe Biden for failing to reverse the burgeoning arms industry that developed under the Trump administration. Instead, policies such as reducing congressional oversight on arms sales have continued, contradicting Democratic claims to place human rights at the centre of foreign policy.